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HANDBOOK

OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

BY

ALEXANDER STEWART, D.D.

PRINCIPAL AND PRIMARIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, ST. MARY'S COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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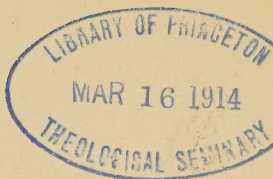
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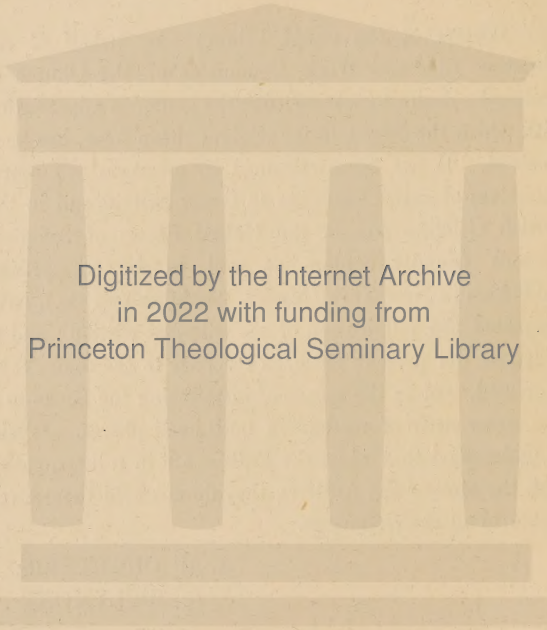


GENERAL EDITORIAL NOTE

THE Editors of the Guild Library—on behalf of the Christian Life and Work Committee of the Church of Scotland—desire to acknowledge the generous appreciation with which the Series, in its original cheap form, has been received. It has been welcomed by members and representatives of many Churches in Great Britain and in the British Colonies and in the United States of America. Various friendly readers, as well as the enterprising publishers in New York (Messrs. Randolph and Co.), have suggested the publication of an enlarged edition; and it is hoped the present issue, in response to the desire thus expressed, will be the means of introducing the books to a still wider circle of readers in both hemispheres. It will be understood that while the Editors are in full sympathy with the aims of the Authors, they do not hold themselves bound to all their opinions.

A. H. CHARTERIS.

J. A. M'CLYMONT.



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PREFACE

THIS Handbook was originally prepared at the request of the Life and Work Committee of the Church of Scotland as one of a series intended to be used in Guilds and Bible Classes. While this was its immediate occasion, a further aim of the writer has been to furnish within the smallest possible compass what might serve as a basis for oral instruction, or for private study on a more extended scale. There are many excellent Handbooks of Christian Evidences, but none, so far as known to the writer, specially suitable for this purpose. His aim has been to condense his material as much as possible, so as to embrace a somewhat wide range while going sufficiently into detail to illustrate all points of importance, and make clear the drift of the main argument. The difficulties which beset the task chiefly arise from two causes—first, the extent of the subject itself, and secondly, the varying circumstances of those who are expected to use the book. It was impossible to include within the limits assigned even a *survey* of the subject in all its ramifications; and it was, therefore, necessary to make a selection of topics. But again, the ways of thought characteristic, for example, of young men dwelling amidst the busy life of the town, in contact with the discussions of the workshop and the office, and acquainted with the periodical literature of the day in which the deepest questions are freely dealt with, are very different from those of the inhabitants of the country

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HANDBOOK

OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE AND VALUE OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

1. CHRISTIANITY has always had to encounter opposition, and Christians must be prepared to justify to themselves and others what they accept and believe.

2. The replies to the attacks upon Christianity which have come from Jews and Heathen, from the side of philosophy as well as that of science, have usually been called *Apologies*—"apology" here, however, meaning "defence," not "excuse."

3. Christianity has been understood and presented under various aspects and with various modifications from the days of Christ to our own day, but has remained substantially the same, and of a character sufficiently distinctive to be readily and generally recognised.

4. The Christian apologist may set himself to

meet special modes of attack, but in so far as he does so his work is apt to be of only temporary value.

5. The Christian apologist may lay the whole weight of his argument upon the establishment of some special point, such as Miracle, Inspiration, or the Moral Character of Christianity, but this course has the drawback that any modification of view upon the point selected is apt to create alarm among those who had deemed it secure, and in any case leads to continual reconstruction of the argument.

6. It is better, therefore, to supplement either of these methods by a general view of several lines of evidence which shall form a connected series, and be mutually supporting.

7. The evidences of Christianity do not claim to be demonstrative, but to have a high degree of probability, as high as in the case of other principles which determine human action.

8. In conducting the argument we must be on our guard against the influence of bias or prepossession.

1. From the time of its first introduction Christianity has been exposed to misunderstanding, misrepresentation, criticism, and assault from many quarters and on diverse grounds. It has consequently been under the necessity from time to time of explaining and justifying its position and claims, both by setting forth its true character and by rebutting the objections which have been brought against it. The question, "Why should we believe?" is a natural and legitimate one. Faith may be called forth instinctively when the object of faith is presented

to our minds, but it cannot long continue without inquiring as to the grounds of its existence, without seeking a reason for the assurance it brings. Still more, when an attempt is made to persuade others to adopt the same views and accept the same principles as those which have commended themselves to us, it becomes necessary to be able to give a "reason for the hope that is in us." We may not be able to explain everything. Faith implies that we are prepared to act upon more than we absolutely know, or can rigorously prove. But into every ground of action, and especially into a matter so complex as the Christian faith, there enters much which is a proper subject of proof, which can be commended to the mind by argument and evidence. And when we consider the difficulties which suggest themselves to the earnest seeker after truth, or are urged by those who are openly opposed to Christianity or only half convinced of its value and importance, we see the necessity and advantage of stating as clearly, and supporting as strongly as we can, the reasons on which Christianity bases its claims to the allegiance of men.

2. The earliest attacks upon Christianity came from the side of the Jews, who naturally resented the important differences which divided the Church from the Synagogue, especially the Messiahship of Jesus and the attitude of Christians to the Mosaic Law. Then followed the attempts of heathen philosophers and rulers to undermine Christianity by argument, to overwhelm it with ridicule, and to extinguish it by persecution. The treatises which were written in answer to these attacks upon the new religion received the name of "Apologies," that is "defences," from which the general subject of Christian Evidences has come to be known as Apologetics.¹ It is

¹ See Note I. "*Apology*" and "*Apologetics*"; also Note II. *History of Apologetics*.

important, however, to notice that in this use of the word "apology," there is nothing implied of the nature of *excuse*, no admission of inferiority or blameworthiness. From the time of the Apologies just mentioned to the present day, the assaults have been many, sometimes affecting Christianity as a whole, sometimes particular parts or aspects of it; but the champions of the Faith have also not been few. Prominent among the contests which have been waged was that with the English Deism of last century, which gave occasion for such a noble monument of Christian philosophy as Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. This Deism, in many of its features, has been revived in the Rationalism of the present day. The great problem of to-day is, however, the reconciliation of Christianity and Science, or rather, the adjustment of their relations, so that all that is essential and distinctive in Christianity may be preserved, while the authority of Science in its legitimate sphere, and so far as its methods are applicable, is not disturbed or disputed.

3. At this point the question may not unfairly be raised as to how far Christianity has remained the same under all these attacks, how far through the long course of ages and through all the vicissitudes of its history, it has preserved its identity. Is the religion which we hold under this name one with that which was defended against the Sceptics of last century, one with that of the Reformers, with that of the early Church, with that of the Apostles, with the doctrine of the Master himself? It is evident that there are respects in which it is not the same, respects in which it has been altered and modified, developed and expanded, in which it has received an infusion of alien elements which have not only changed to some extent its outward appearance but have

deprived it of spiritual power. The assaults which have been made upon Christianity have not left it uninfluenced, for they often derived their strength from some element of forgotten or neglected truth which they represented, and by the recognition and absorption of which Christianity has been enabled to overcome them. But, notwithstanding all this, Christianity is in substance and essence the same throughout. The leading views and doctrines regarding God, man, and the world, are practically unchanged; the historical relation of the Christian religion to the Person of Christ and to the Scriptures has formed a bond of union between believers of successive generations; and the Christian ideal, the Christian spirit, and the life which these inspire and guide, are of a character so distinctive that they are recognised at once in whatever special circumstances or associations they may be manifested. The Christianity of our own day appears in very many forms, according as it is influenced by individual, social, national, or Church peculiarities; yet though it might be difficult to draw the line at every point between the Christian and the non-Christian, we have a fairly distinct notion of what Christianity is apart from all such peculiarities, and do not allow an occasional difficulty in applying the distinction to cause us to doubt for a moment that it exists. As the life of the plant is the same as the life of the seed, as the life of the man is the development of that of the child, so, through all its progress and the variety of experience through which it has passed, Christianity preserves its identity, and that which we maintain and defend under this name to-day is in all essential features that which the first Apologists set themselves to uphold.

4. In dealing with the evidences of Christianity it might be expedient for the Christian advocate to keep in view certain special modes of attack. These modes have varied,

as we have seen, in different ages. Each generation has its own difficulties, and its sceptics develop their assault from their own peculiar standpoint. It is obvious that we should uselessly expend our strength in meeting objections which no one now urges. It is obvious also that it would be equally useless to base an argument upon a proposition which our opponents would at once dispute or deny. Much good service has accordingly been rendered by writers who have devoted themselves to the treatment of a particular subject which may be attracting attention, or to the examination of the views of an individual thinker, or class of thinkers. By starting from some common ground, or from principles of such a nature that when once clearly understood they are generally admitted, such writers endeavour to show the untenable character of the position occupied by their opponents. Those who experience difficulties in regard to special points of Christian belief must always be indebted to writers of this class. It is evident, however, that the special aim of such work involves a certain danger, arising out of its limitation. Controversy is apt to degenerate into petty criticism. An argument valid as against an objection presented in a certain form may be useless as against the same objection more profoundly apprehended or more ingeniously stated. Works dealing with current difficulties are of real value only when they get beneath the temporary purpose, the surface controversy, to the broad principles, the eternal truths, by the test of which all that calls itself Christian must ultimately be tried. Besides, as we shall see hereafter, Christianity is a system whose parts mutually uphold each other; it is supported not by one argument but by the convergence of many; and difficulties which loom largely when they are separately considered, lose much of their force when the points affected are viewed in their due proportion and in their relation to the general scheme.

5. Again, there is a method of exhibiting the evidence of Christianity which consists not so much in the attempt to meet a special form of attack, as in the selection of a special position in defence of the Faith, and the concentration of energy for the purpose of securing and maintaining the point thus selected. Many of the positions which it has thus been sought to make good are of prime importance, and so long as they can be firmly held their maintenance is practically decisive of the conflict. Thus Paley, in his well-known work, chose to rest the question of the truth or falsity of Christianity upon the credibility of the evidence for the Christian miracles. If men, he argued, were found willing to suffer and die in attestation of their belief in a miraculous history, we have the highest degree of probability that the history was as true as it was marvellous. Paley looked upon the other lines of evidence in favour of Christianity as auxiliary to this, his main argument; such, for example, as Prophecy, the Morality of the Gospel, and the Character of Christ. Other writers, again, select the Inspiration of Scripture, the Authority of the Church, or the Resurrection of Christ as the citadel which they are bound at all hazards to maintain, believing that if these or similar truths can be reasonably established, they involve the truth of the whole Christian system. Others regard the key of the position as lying rather in the Internal Evidences of Christianity, those which appeal to the moral nature of man, arguing, not without justice, that it is the moral elevation of Christianity,—especially the character of Christ,—and its adaptation to human needs, which leads us to accept the Christian revelation as a revelation from God,—that Miracles are believed in because of their association with, and suitableness to, a system of so lofty a character, and are therefore not first but second in the order of importance as evidences, confirming rather than proving the divine nature of the religion. Here again the

objection stated in the last paragraph applies. While there is undeniable advantage in concentrating our forces upon a single point, the danger is great that any weakness made apparent here may give rise to the apprehension that all is lost. If the truth of Christianity is staked upon the possibility of maintaining any single point, however important, this may lead to an exaggeration of statement which when found not to be fully borne out provokes a reaction, and a panic ensues. There are traces of this in the circumstances which have led to the change of front among modern apologists, by which the position of Paley has been abandoned and miracles are defended on the ground of the religion rather than the religion on the ground of miracles. And it is still more apparent in the fact that so many are perplexed and dismayed at the critical conclusions in reference to the Scriptures which believing scholars of the highest character have declared to be irresistible. Such fears are only to be expected among those whose faith has been bound up with a rigid theory of Biblical inspiration and authority, any modification of which seems to threaten the stability of the whole.

6. Both, therefore, in regard to points of attack and attitudes of defence it may be said that as these are always changing with the varying fortunes of the battle, it is well to unite with the most strenuous efforts to resist the one and maintain the other, that calmness of mind and sense of security, which can only come from a somewhat more general survey of the issues at stake. If we have a general understanding of the nature and historical position of Christianity and its relation to the rival theories which dispute with it the right to explain the world of experience and guide the conduct of men, we shall be less alarmed at an assault which only involves a small portion of the circle of our beliefs, and we shall be less concerned if our attitude

of defence requires in some point or other to be modified. It is our purpose in this little manual to indicate a series of evidences which shall bring into view the more important features of Christianity, illustrate its nature and value as a religious system, and exhibit its claims upon the attention and the allegiance of men. Such points are the Nature of Religion, the Existence of God, Revelation and Miracles, the Person, Character, and Resurrection of Christ,—Christian teaching, and its influence and adaptation to human need. A survey of this kind must either commend or condemn the system to which it refers,—each line of proof having much to be advanced in its support, and all together forming a cord of many strands which shall not be easily broken.

7. It is necessary to observe that the argument in favour of Christianity does not claim to be *demonstrative*. This should be evident, but misunderstanding is common upon the point. The argument does not *compel* belief, it does not, like a mathematical proposition, make its truth apparent to all who understand what the words mean. It must not be supposed, however, that the admission that the argument is not demonstrative is equivalent to an admission that it is *weak*. Evidence may be probable evidence only, and yet be of any degree of strength. It may reach the highest moral certainty, though of course it may extend no further than the merest presumption. Probability is our guide in all the affairs of life. The grounds on which we accept statements which we have not personally investigated—historical or geographical statements, for example—those by which business transactions involving immense amounts of money, and social relations involving the happiness and welfare of families, are rendered possible, are such that we can only claim for them extreme likelihood. It is no fatal defect, therefore, in the evidences of religion that they appeal to the same

faculty of judgment which we bring to bear upon life in general.

8. A word ought also to be said about the influence of bias or prepossession in dealing with such evidences as those just mentioned. Our minds are instruments which habit may render capable of acting only in certain directions. There are fashions in thought as there are fashions in dress ; there is an intellectual atmosphere, a spirit of the age, in which alone men seem able to live and move.¹ The literary man has no liking for the severity of a scientific demonstration, the man of science cannot recognise the force of that which does not conform to his rules of inquiry. Methods learned in one field are applied to truths belonging to another, and facts are overlooked or rejected for want of the eye habituated to perceive them, or the appropriate skill to put them to the test.² We must be careful, therefore, in judging of the claims of Christianity to put them to the right kind of proof, not to ask from them what they cannot fairly be expected to supply, to remember that our reason may be already possessed by ideas, which lead us to reject or question those now claiming acceptance, but which themselves are based on evidence of a precisely similar character and of no greater degree of force.

¹ See Note III. *The Psychological Atmosphere.*

² See Note IV. *Bias or Prepossession.*

CHAPTER I

GOD AND RELIGION

1. THE starting point for the study of the Christian Evidences must be a conviction of the existence of God, and of the reality and power of religion. When these truths are denied, or only vaguely held, the special proofs on behalf of Christianity lose their force; but where they are admitted, these special proofs at once acquire a high degree of probability.

2. **Religion** is a universal phenomenon of human experience and history. Its universality shows that it is natural to man and corresponds to a universally felt need.

3. The object of religion assumes a great variety of forms ranging from Fetichism to Theism, and a complete treatment of this subject would involve an examination of all forms of the Belief in God, so that we might form an estimate of their comparative worthiness and adequacy.

4. Though it is not by argument we obtain our conviction of the **existence of God**, formal arguments in support of this conclusion are not useless, and merely go over again, with scientific precision,

the course pursued by popular and ordinary thought. The four forms in which the argument for the existence of God has usually been presented are not independent proofs, but supplement one another.

(1) The first leads to the thought of the great Cause of all things. As we, and everything else that we know of, have come into existence, and as we can think of nothing coming into existence without a cause, we conclude that we must either go back from cause to cause in an unending series, or must rest in a First Cause, a self-existent Being. It is held that the latter is more reasonable than the former.

(2) The second form of the argument leads to the thought of an intelligent Author of the world, One who adapts means to ends, and leaves upon His work the marks of design and purpose. As *we* guide *our* action by an already formed idea of what we are to do, and as we infer the existence of such a purpose in *others* from the attainment of an end through the combination of means unlikely to act together unless intelligently combined; so the order of the world as a whole, and in the multitude of its parts, exhibits to such an extent the appearances which we associate with intelligence, that it is more rational to believe in this explanation of it than to regard it as self-caused or the result of chance.

(3) The third argument rests upon the conviction which the very constitution of our minds seems to impress upon us, that the thought of God is that of a Being who must exist,—that it is impossible to

regard the thought of a perfect Being as a *mere* thought.

(4) The fourth argument leads us from our sense of moral responsibility to infer the existence of a Being to whom we are responsible, and who is Himself a personal and moral Being.

1. Some writers upon Christian Evidences take for granted a belief in the existence of God and the more general facts of religious experience, and confine themselves to the special claims of Christianity as the highest, purest, and best authenticated form of religion. When, however, so much depends, as we have seen, upon the general impression made upon the reader's mind, it seems better to build from the foundation, and to exhibit, however imperfectly, the nature of the foundation on which we build. The special evidences of the Christian faith will be more clearly understood if we have clear notions on the subject of God and Religion; and when any scepticism enters in regard to the former, it rarely stops short of affecting the latter. If Religion cannot be ignored, dispensed with, or explained away, the question as regards Christianity is narrowed into this, Which is the highest and best religion? which agrees best with all we know of the world and of man? For it is evident that if a satisfactory case cannot be presented for Religion in general, it is almost useless and superfluous to contend for any particular form of it.

2. In modern times the fact of the universal prevalence of Religion has been questioned, but without success (see Flint, *Antitheistic Theories*, Lecture VII. and Notes xxv.-xxx.) Even if a genuine case of a purely atheistic people could be produced, it would scarcely lessen the significance of the general rule. The existence of cripples does not affect our conclusion as to what is the normal

constitution of the human body. Religion is universal, and we claim therefore that it rests upon a principle or principles inherent in man's nature, forming part of his very being.¹ The tendency is there, and though the diversity of forms which Religion assumes forbids us to conclude that anything more is originally given, this diversity of form does not hinder us from recognising the common character maintained throughout. The following may be cited as definitions of Religion in its most general aspect. *Canon Liddon*: "Religion consists fundamentally in the practical recognition of a constraining bond between the inward life of man and an unseen Person." *Professor Flint*: "Religion is man's belief in a being or beings mightier than himself and inaccessible to his senses, but not indifferent to his sentiments and actions, with the feelings and practices which flow from such belief." *Dr. Martineau*: "Belief in an ever-living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding Moral relations with mankind." *Professor Max Müller*: "The perception of the infinite under such manifestations as are able to influence the moral character of man." Our earthly life owes to religion its highest and most complete development, and no power has a greater influence on the prosperity or decadence of nations.² The attempts which have been made to dispense with it, or to supersede it by philosophy or science, have not been, and do not appear likely to be, successful. As examples of such attempts reference may be made to the following: (a) Buddhism in its original form attempted to dispense with an object of worship; it was an atheistic system; but after Buddha's death he himself received adoration as divine. (b) Comte, the French philosopher, began by denouncing Religion as a delusion, whose place was to be

¹ See Note V. *Universality of Religion.*

² See Note VI. *Religion and Nationality.*

taken by the philosophy he taught; but he ended by adding to his philosophy a new religion, with services of its own, consisting in the worship of humanity, and the adoration even of individuals in whom humanity was held to be personified. (c) Philosophy had its opportunity in the ancient world. Whatever philosophy or art could do for man was done in the ages before Christ, and its inadequacy as a substitute for religion is seen in the festering corruption of the Roman world. (d) John Stuart Mill may be taken as an example of the scientific spirit. His biography shows how little can be done by Science for man's spiritual wants, and how the void caused by the absence of Religion may be less worthily filled up.¹

3. If, then, religion cannot be done away with, there remains only to determine which form of it has been found to afford the most satisfactory theory of the world and the best guide of life,—to be most consonant with the circumstances, and most suitable to the needs of man. We find that the forms which the idea of God has assumed range from the gross Fetichism of the interior of Africa or of Australia to the pure Theism of Christianity. Even Fetichism involves a belief in supernatural power, in fate and mystery, and in spirits of good and evil. In Egypt, India, and Greece we have a popular Polytheism side by side with a higher ethical and intellectual doctrine, tending to Pantheism. Israel is the first example of a Monotheistic nation.² From Israel the Christian idea of God was derived, with modifications peculiar to itself. The doctrine of Christian Theism—"that the universe owes its existence, and continuance in existence, to the reason and will of a self-existent Being, who is infinitely powerful, wise, and good; that Nature has a Creator and Preserver, the nations a Governor, men a Heavenly

¹ See Note VII. *Substitutes for Religion.*

² See Note VIII. *Religion of Israel.*

Father and Judge"¹—commends itself, on a survey of history, as the highest and worthiest conception of God, infringing at no point what is perceived to be the true relation to each other of God, man, and nature, and at the same time satisfying the religious aspirations and the devotional sentiments of the human soul.

4. The religious man has, altogether apart from any scientific inquiry into the question, a firm persuasion of the existence and the perfections of God; and for any confirmation of his faith he relies, not on logical demonstration, but on the witness of the Church, the testimony of Scripture, and the common consent of those whose character has won his respect. His persuasion is of the nature of a verified experiment. In some way he has begun with a belief in God, and has found it the suitable and indispensable basis of a religious life, the reality and practical efficiency of which is to him a demonstration of the truth of that in which he has believed. But how did he come to start with this belief? Partly, no doubt, from tradition; it is a belief in which he has been educated, with which he had become familiarised before adopting it as the guiding principle of his own life—but partly also from that vague, popular, almost unconscious perception of the grounds of the belief, which it is the business of Science to analyse and set forth in more precise form. Scientific inquiry does carefully—seeking to remove all chance of mistake—what popular thought in such a matter does rapidly, it may be inaccurately, and by a sort of intuition. It may not be necessary for each of us individually, but it is undoubtedly of advantage, to search out the deepest questions in this full and accurate way. And it is no true piety, no conviction sure of itself, which shrinks from trying to account for its faith, from desiring to know the why and wherefore of that faith.

¹ Professor Flint: *Theism*, p. 18.

Merely the leading principle of each argument is indicated here as simply and briefly as possible.

The third argument is that which is most abstruse in its character, and can hardly be made intelligible to those who have not received a training in philosophy. For such, however, it will have considerable force.¹ The most popular form of the argument is undoubtedly that placed second, known as the Argument from, or rather to, Design. It is susceptible of an endless variety of illustration. All departments of nature exhibit order, and therefore manifest intelligence; they speak as it were from the ordering Mind to the mind perceiving that order, from the Spirit in and above nature to the spirit in man. Hardly inferior to this in interest, and appreciable by all who reflect on this important subject, is the fourth or Moral Argument. Our moral life is built up of two elements or principles, Duty or Obligation, and Liberty. We ought to obey the law made known to us; we are free to disobey it if we will. Without the power of determination man is subject to a mechanical law; without the sense of obligation his free will is but caprice. Whence comes, then, the feeling of responsibility? To whom are we responsible? Our consciences witness to the law, and to the Author of the law. Our intellectual and moral activity find their explanation, their ground, their unity in God. God has Himself an Ethical character. He is a Person, the God at once of conscience and of nature.

¹ See Note IX. *Argument from the Necessity of Thought.*

CHAPTER II

PART I

ANTITHEISTIC THEORIES

1. IF the belief in God as a self-existent personal Being, who is infinitely powerful, wise, and good, be rejected, we must choose among the rival theories of the universe, of which at the present day the chief are Materialism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism.

(1) **Materialism** is the doctrine that mind—that is, conscious and intelligent agency—had nothing to do with the formation or arrangement of the universe; that, on the contrary, mind is the result or function of certain combinations of material atoms, and is related to the nervous system as chemical or electrical qualities to the substances which exhibit them. Materialism is not a body of ascertained scientific facts and laws, but a system of scientific speculation. It has not arrived at a definite conclusion as to the ultimate constitution of matter, and has failed to explain the origin of life, or how the transition is effected from the stimulated nerve to conscious sensation or perception. It affords no basis for moral distinctions, and denies moral freedom.

(2) **Pantheism** resolves the universe into one principle, which is called God, but is impersonal, and only attains consciousness in man. In nature it is only a blind force. Pantheism contradicts the testimony of consciousness as to personal existence, and abolishes the religious relation, as well as moral distinctions and freedom.

(3) **Agnosticism** is the name by which those designate their position who do not *deny* the existence of God, the future world, and other doctrines of religion, but declare that we do not, and cannot, *know* anything about these subjects, and should therefore leave them out of account. The truth in Agnosticism is that man's knowledge of God and of heavenly things, is, though real, imperfect and inadequate. We know God, but we do not know all that He is. Agnosticism is related on its scientific side to Positivism, which confines knowledge to the facts of which we are directly conscious, especially the impressions made upon the senses; and on its practical side to Secularism, which would have us concentrate all our attention on this present life as the only real and important matter for us. Agnosticism, as distinguished from temporary suspense of judgment, is an untenable compromise.

(a) Its great advocate¹ is himself inconsistent when he declares that we must recognise the existence of a power which "works in us certain effects," but of which "the nature remains for ever inconceivable." If we know that such a power exists, we may know something more about it, and if it works upon us, we can surely infer something as to its nature.

¹ Herbert Spencer.

(b) Agnosticism is less distrust of knowledge than of certain modes of arriving at knowledge—for example, inference—which are yet employed in the sphere of knowledge which the Agnostic recognises (*e.g.* Physical Science).

(c) Agnosticism appears as if requiring a different kind of knowledge in regard to those points it rejects from that which satisfies it in the case of ordinary experience; but if the one knowledge be as real and certain as the other, it is all we need for practical purposes. Because we do not know anything of God in those respects in which he cannot stand in any relation to us and to our destiny, we need not reject the knowledge which we have of Him where He does stand in such relation to us.

(d) Agnosticism defeats itself, as, on its principles, knowledge of anything beyond the consciousness of the present moment may be shown to be untrustworthy.

1. It is worthy of note that the rejection of Theism (*i.e.* of the belief in God) implies the acceptance of some other explanation of the universe. We cannot maintain a merely negative attitude. Besides, therefore, the positive proofs which are offered for the belief in God, we have to take into account the difficulties presented by the rival theories. Of these the most prevalent in the present day are Materialism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism, though the last is less a theory than an attempt to dispense with any definite theory. With regard to the first, it must be admitted that if there is no spirit within man, there can be no evidence of spirit without him; religion is the communion of soul with soul;

revelation is the unveiling of mind to mind. If everything in man, therefore, can be accounted for by a reference to the physical organism, the great support of the Theistic view, and nearly all its value, are taken away. The question is, as Plato put it long ago, Is the relation of the soul to the body that of the harper to the harp, or that of the *melody* to the harp, so that when the instrument is broken the melody for ever ceases? It is well to remember that Materialism seeks its support from physical science, though it is not identical with it. We may fairly claim that the *facts* of science are as compatible with a spiritualistic as with a materialistic explanation of them. Materialism is not science but philosophical speculation. The points where even as a theory it is incomplete have been indicated above. *Pantheism* may be materialistic, but it is not necessarily so. It may recognise a spirit-life at the foundation of all things, but it denies that this principle of the world is conscious or personal. Historically it has not infrequently issued in the view of those who hold life to be not worth living, as full of discontent and misery. *Agnosticism* seems to commend itself by the very modesty, even humility, of the position it takes up. But it is a half-way house in which no true rest can be found. Men may hold their minds in balance for a while, and do so because there are so many interests and occupations with which they can fill them. But when a sense of the reality and the responsibility of life comes upon them, they demand some more positive answer, they ask either certainty, or on which side lies the greater degree of probability. The intellect instinctively asks concerning the Whence and How of what it sees. The heart is conscious of a law, of the voice of duty. Both intellect and heart unite in the search after God and seek to solve the problem as to His existence. The Agnostic recognises the facts of nature and the duties of life: of these he

admits we have a knowledge sufficient for all practical purposes, though even here there are deep problems which remain unsolved ; but because he cannot solve all deep problems with regard to God, he will not admit that we have even a practical knowledge of Him, a knowledge to be gained by inference from the facts of nature and the constitution of man, even if we leave that given by Revelation out of account. Agnosticism is thus essentially inconsistent and untenable whenever it goes beyond the declaration that there is much in relation to God which our intellects cannot apprehend—

“Nay, we see but a part of God, since we gaze with a finite sight ;
And yet not Darkness is He, but a blinding splendour of light.

“Do we shrink from this light, and let our dazzled eyeballs fall ?
Nay ! a God fully known, or utterly dark, were not God at all.”

CHAPTER II

PART II

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

1. THE Antitheistic Theories, discussed in the last chapter, derive their special force for the intellect of the present day from their association with Physical Science, its methods and results.

2. The Reign of Law discerned in physical phenomena is claimed by many as extending to mental and social phenomena, and so as pointing to one ultimate basis of existence, which may be material (Materialism), or spiritual (Pantheism), or of a nature which cannot be known or described (Agnosticism). Upon this basis, the world, as we know it, is said to have come into being by a process of Evolution, the more complex proceeding from simpler forms of existence.

3. Evolution may describe the *mode*, but does not indicate the *cause* of Creation.

4. As Physical Science has been pursued and developed, it has at various points been used by the opponents of Religion and Christianity to discredit these, and has also been opposed by the advocates of the latter, in the conviction that its conclusions were irreconcilable with the conceptions

of the world which were believed to be essential to Religion and laid down by Divine authority.

5. The readiness of many scientific men to attack Christianity is largely a reaction against the way in which the representatives of Philosophy and Theology used the powers they possessed in opposing the progress of scientific investigation.

6. The position thus assumed by Theologians, while in some ways to be regretted, was a natural and intelligible one, and deserving rather of sympathy than of unsparing condemnation, in so far as it sprang from loyalty to truth which was believed to be imperilled.

7. It does not follow that because many points have been surrendered which were formerly maintained, every claim in the name of Science is to be allowed without strict examination.

8. Physical Science is systematised sense-knowledge, and its sphere is therefore restricted, while its methods are not universally applicable.

9. Religion may be the means of purifying the ideas with which it comes into contact, but has no claim to exercise authority within the domain of Science.

10. Authorities in Science are not necessarily authorities in matters of Religion.

11. It is noteworthy that Physical Science has attained its greatest successes in Christian countries, and among its most distinguished cultivators have been many who have adhered to Christianity.

12. It may be expected, therefore, that with the disappearance of unreasoning distrust on the part

of religious men, and of the prejudice due to reaction, on the part of scientific men, a better understanding of the questions at issue will be arrived at, and it will be seen that Religion, as an ineradicable fact of human nature, with all that it implies, is compatible with all that Science is capable of teaching as to the world we live in.

1-3. The object in view in the present chapter is a comparatively simple one. It is not proposed to attempt the solution of any scientific problem from the point of view of religion, or even the delimitation of the respective spheres of Science and Religion. Our purpose is rather to indicate the attitude which the religious apologist is entitled to take up with reference to the questions which have been raised in the name of Science, especially its right to bar his further progress at this point, and to throw its powerful influence into the scale in favour of the antitheistic position. We need not ignore the fact that much disquietude has prevailed on this subject. To many the two views, the scientific and the religious, appear antagonistic, so much so that adherence to the one means the inevitable abandonment of the other. This may indeed be called the great, the peculiar, difficulty which Christianity has in our day to face. Science so fills the air, its methods are becoming so well known, and its results so approve themselves by the tangible benefits which they confer upon mankind that it cannot be wondered at that anything unprovable by its methods, or apparently inconsistent with its deliverances, should at once in many quarters be held as thereby condemned, or at least be viewed with grave, even if at the same time unwelcome, suspicion.¹

¹ "Physical Science is felt to have conferred such benefits upon mankind, and to have so widely extended our knowledge of the

There can be little doubt that the theories discussed in the last chapter derive no small part of their influence from their association with Physical Science. The latter exemplifies through the whole range of its phenomena the workings of Law, one, uniform, invariable. It has given to the conception of Law a meaning and force never before perceived. Not only are its operations found in each department of Nature's great kingdom, but they bear towards each other an invariable relation, so that the various departments are seen to belong to one great system, suggesting a unity of principle at the foundation of the whole, one ultimate basis of existence. If, as is claimed by many, this reign of Law could be proved to extend to mental and social phenomena, so that these also exhibit uniformities of the same kind, standing in a relation of correspondence with those of the physical world, the inference drawn by the opponents of religion would have much in its favour. It is true that Theism also depends largely upon the unity of nature as indicating the unity of the Author of Nature, as well as His wisdom and His power. Every fact which the Antitheist can adduce as showing that the universe is self-subsistent and self-sustaining, the Theist includes as an evidence of the Divine plan, of which Nature is the realisation. The difference lies in the character attributed to Law in the two modes of conceiving it. According to the one, Law is uniform, necessary, all-pervading, of one kind throughout, incalculable, where it is so, only through its complexity, pointing to a principle of existence which need not be intelligent, and certainly is not free.¹ The other conception of Law

universe, that in every succeeding generation an increasing number of persons feel impatient of any theory which appears in any way to come into collision with it, or to deny what it seems necessary for it to assume."—Kennedy, *Natural Theology and Modern Thought*, p. 90. See Note X. *Naturalism*.

¹ See Note XI. *The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science*.

distinguishes between physical and moral laws, recognises intelligence and freedom as characteristic of its ultimate principle, and while admitting every fact of science, claims also to include facts of the greatest significance, which upon the other hypothesis must be either ignored or explained away. The basis of existence according to the Antitheist may be, as we have seen, material (Materialism), or of a spiritual or semi-spiritual character (Pantheism), or of a nature which cannot be known or described (Agnosticism). But upon this basis, however it may be conceived, the world as we know it is said to have come into being by a process of Evolution, the more complex proceeding from simpler forms of existence. What is true in the doctrine of Evolution, is, however, compatible with the Theistic as well as with the Antitheistic view. Evolution, as has been frequently pointed out,¹ is a theory not of the *cause*, but of the *mode* of creation. The originating principle of the universe may be God or matter. Evolution is the mode of operation of either cause or source of being, in giving rise to the forms of being which successively appear. It is true that the character of the process must be conceived of strictly in accordance with the nature of the cause assumed. If the latter be a necessary cause, materialistic or pantheistic, the whole process of development will bear the character of necessity. If the cause be free and intelligent, the process will be thought of as the working out of his design. Just as surely in the one case as in the other, the operation of the cause is manifested at every stage of the process. It is only a Deism which thinks of God as having made the world and left it thereafter to itself, which can feel that He is further removed from it and us, if conceived of as creating not by instantaneous fiat, but by gradual develop-

¹ Probably for the first time in an explicit form, in A. M. Fairbairn's *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History*, p. 92.

ment. To those who recognise His working in every change, He is always near ;¹ and in reference to Him who knows the end from the beginning, a plan carried forward through untold ages, only reveals more wonderfully the patience with which He works, as well as the infinite magnitude of His purposes and aims.

4-6. It has been justly observed² that the more or less declared hostility to Religion of many representatives of Physical Science and what is called modern thought, is largely the result of a *reaction*, of that swing of the pendulum of opinion from one extreme to the other, of which the experience of every day furnishes us with fresh instances. No doubt in earlier ages a system of philosophy was regarded as authoritative which imposed its forms of thought upon Nature rather than sought Nature's truths in Nature herself. From Aristotle's general principles, by means of Aristotle's logic, conclusions were derived which were regarded as representing the truth of fact without being subjected to the test of experiment. On the rise of what is known as the Baconian philosophy, which rested upon observation and experiment conducted in accordance with a gradually improved method of scientific induction, the errors of mediæval physics brought discredit upon the entire structure of mediæval thought. A method which had proved itself so incompetent in one sphere became suspected in every sphere in which it had been, or could be applied. Then Theology not only represented the most important interest which could engage the atten-

¹ Romanes (*Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 118, 121) points out that "there is nothing either in the science or philosophy of mankind inimical to the theory of natural causation being the energising of a will objective to us," and emphasises what is important and too often forgotten in connection with this subject, that in proportion as that objective will is *self-consistent*, its operations must appear to us non-optional, or mechanical. It is no argument, therefore, "against the divine origin of a thing, event, etc., to prove it due to natural causation."

² Cf. Fisher, *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 447 seq.

tion of a finite yet immortal being, but it dominated the whole intellectual arena, and admittedly included in its claims to spiritual authority many subjects which men have since come to see were not really or rightly included in it. The Church had, on the break up of the Western Empire, been the great medium of handing down the torch of light and learning to later generations. It is not to be wondered at if men's thoughts of nature, man, and God had become entwined into a system of which every part was held as equally authoritative, and in regard to which the questioning of one part should seem to threaten the stability of the whole. As from time to time men have come to distinguish between the sphere in which the Church or Scripture could be held as rightly deciding, and that in which the decision belonged to other authorities and could only be reached by independent modes of investigation, can we marvel that to many the world should appear to be turned upside down? It was not merely that the Church's authority was so far discredited, but that, as in an earthquake, the solid ground seemed rocking beneath their feet. The struggle against such ideas, if to some extent the effort to retain power on the part of those possessed of it, was even more the instinctive shrinking of men's minds from losing grasp of all certainty whatever. Those who have been resuscitated after apparent drowning tell us that the agonising thing is not the drowning but the coming to life again. Even so the first strokes by which the intellectual torpor of mankind was broken through, and consciousness imparted of some of their hitherto unnoticed surroundings, were no doubt a painful experience. The forced opening of the eyes did not seem a friendly act; rather did man seem to be deprived of all that was to him dear, valuable, and helpful. It had been taken for granted that whatever Church or Bible touched on, the allusion was invested with the same title to deference,

as confessedly was due to their teachings on the highest and holiest themes. The resistance which followed was no doubt unwise and carried too far, but it deserves not more our condemnation as the desperate struggle of blind and infatuated ignorance, than our sympathy as the struggle in self-defence of men who set the highest interests in the highest place, who trembled when these seemed to be imperilled, who thought they knew what they were losing, but could not tell whither they were being led.

As regards the emancipation of their special pursuits from the control which the representatives of Theology had naturally though mistakenly sought to retain, victory has been with the physical philosophers. Modern Science no less than ancient wisdom is justified of her children. But it has been the fashion with many of her votaries to exaggerate the difficulties which early scientific development had to encounter, while they fail to distinguish between the representatives of Religion and the Religion they sincerely, however mistakenly, represented,—they fail to distinguish between the treasure these sought to guard and the minor matters they believed to be bound up with it. As has been already indicated, it is to a reaction against the restraints to which they believe, and so far justly believe, that scientific investigation was formerly subjected, that the bitterness of many of those who attack religion from this side is due. Because Science within her own province has proved her truth, they claim that all who ever opposed her—even though it may be shown that in doing so these opponents were really going beyond their own proper province—were false and the supporters of falsehood, that they even had no proper province to defend. While recognising and understanding, so far as we may, extreme standpoints such as this, we may well be on our guard against the falsehood of extremes,

and suspect the reliability, at least to their full extent, of movements which in their nature are reactions from real or supposed antagonisms.

7. It may not be pleasant or reassuring for us to read the story of alarm, outcry, persecution, which has attended many of the notable advances of Physical Science. If we condemn the intolerance which persecuted Galileo, and stamped with ecclesiastical censure the Copernican system of astronomy, we remember how the same spirit animated the long struggle with geology and resisted its conclusions as to the antiquity of the earth, how still more recently the luminous suggestions of Darwin and his biological followers have been combated, not on the question of scientific accuracy, but because of their apparent Theological implications. The opposition to such views is perfectly intelligible without imputation of more than the inevitable amount of ignorance, groundless terror, narrowness and intolerance. But we must certainly not draw the lesson from the history of the controversy that the walls of the theological Jericho are to tremble whenever the men of Science choose to blow the trumpet. Because much has been yielded in the past, it does not follow that everything is to be given up in the future. Scientific *facts* must be acknowledged whenever they are established, the supremacy of Science in her own domain must be frankly acknowledged, but scientific *theories* must be examined and scrutinised before they are admitted. We may fairly claim that scientific men should be generally agreed among themselves before they can expect those who have not their special training to accept their authority; we may admit a probability that a certain view is correct while yet many gaps remain to be filled up before it can be claimed as established, while, on the other hand, some broad conclusion seems to us to be based on somewhat narrow premises. The lesson which ought

to be learned by the theologian and apologist from such experiences is that on that border-ground where religion and science approach each other, it is as necessary that the theologian should not attempt to claim more than what the principles and methods proper to Theology assure to him, as that the man of Science should in like manner restrict himself to his own sphere.

8. It is important therefore to notice what exactly Physical Science is. It is systematised and ascertained knowledge, but it is strictly confined to knowledge which comes to us through the senses. It is not meant, by thus pointing out the source of the knowledge, to call in question its accuracy as far as it goes. When we speak of "sense-knowledge" it is often to call attention to the fallibility of that knowledge, for the senses are deceptive, and need to be supplemented and corrected by each other, and by reason. But for scientific purposes the senses are carefully trained, and they are aided by ingenious and delicate apparatus, so that they give invariably the same results,—in some sciences the "personal equation," the amount of tendency to error peculiar to the individual observer, being accurately measured and taken into account. When we emphasise the fact that Physical Science is systematised sense-knowledge, it is not any degree of untrustworthiness, it is limitation of range, limitation of the applicability of its method, which is in view. Is there no knowledge save what comes to us through the senses and is resolvable into the terms of sense-perception? It is a very inadequate philosophy of human experience which says there is not. The human mind is not a *tabula rasa*; it has a constitution of its own, a power of transmuting into thought the material presented to it in perception; it reacts upon what it perceives, and contributes elements of its own to the general result. And the methods and criteria which are in place in Physical Science are not

universally applicable. It is not Religion only to which they are inapplicable. The statement that they do not apply to spiritual matters rouses opposition at once, and is set down to prejudice. But what of metaphysics, of philosophy? Does Science itself not run up constantly into regions where it is lost to view, where it rests upon hypothesis and theory, upon principles which it is as incapable of proving as of disproving?¹ That intermediate world which the senses perceive and with which they deal is seen to rest upon realities as incomprehensible to Science as the inferences which the Theist draws from its acknowledged facts, and to which he claims that these facts indubitably point. Out of Metaphysics Science springs, into Theology it passes, but both of these regions are beyond its power of observation or of verification. "No scientific test, however delicate, can discover the presence of God as it discovers a current of magnetic or electric force."² The senses individually are limited. The eye cannot perceive a sound, nor the ear a colour.³ Why should it be denied that there is that of which none of them singly, nor all of them in combination, can discover the faintest trace. The speculations of physical philosophers themselves show that the phenomena of sense cannot be regarded as self-subsistent and self-explanatory. A bare Positivism affords no rest for the mind. "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter," and so the important things in existence are not those which sense immediately perceives, but those which reason discerns in and by them.

9. But it is equally necessary to determine the proper

¹ "Although science is essentially engaged in explaining, her work is necessarily confined to the sphere of natural causation; beyond that sphere (*i.e.* the sensuous) she can explain nothing. In other words, even if she were able to explain the natural causation of everything, she would be unable to assign the ultimate *raison d'être* of anything." —Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 125, 126. See Note XII. *Limitations of Science*.

² Mair, *Studies in the Christian Evidences*, p. 18. ³ *Ibid.* p. 18.

sphere and function of Religion in reference to that borderland where the questions specially in view at this moment emerge. Here we note that it is the accident, not the essential, of Religion which is found within the domain of Science—its clothing, its envelope, its medium. Coming as Religion does into human life as a living force, it cannot but touch all the elements of that life. But it does not change their nature; it only seeks as far as possible to invest them with a religious meaning, to try them by the light which it casts upon them. The sunlight passes into the hovel; its nature is not changed, its purity is not tainted by what it falls on there, foul and repulsive as many of the objects it reveals may be. It may cause an instantaneous cleansing, but it does not directly effect it. Rather does it bring the truth of each object into clear perception. So Religion does not substitute true for untrue thoughts as to physical being, but it seeks to bring whatever thoughts there are into the service of the ideally good, the morally beautiful. In so doing, it may purify and elevate the thoughts themselves; there are thoughts which cannot coexist with the heavenly light, which fall away in its presence as mean and unworthy.¹ Among the points of controversy to which the early chapters of Genesis have given rise, one thing is clear. Comparing them with the cycle of traditions, Chaldæan or Phœ-

¹ Romanes (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157) calls attention to what he regards as "one of the strongest pieces of objective evidence in favour of Christianity." It is "the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrines which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount." He considers this negative argument as "almost as strong as the positive one from what Christ did teach." He contrasts Jesus Christ in this respect with other thinkers of antiquity. "Read the dialogues (of Plato), and see how enormous is the contrast with the gospels in respect of errors of all kinds—reaching even to absurdity in respect of reason, and to sayings shocking to the moral sense. Yet this is confessedly the highest level of human reason on the lines of spirituality, when unaided by alleged revelation."

nician, to which they are claimed as belonging, we cannot fail to be struck by the nobler form and tone of the Hebrew narratives, by the absence of grotesque and unworthy elements, and this, it is obvious, is due to the religious spirit by which they are pervaded.¹ Whether reconcilable with the deliverances of Science or not, the first chapter of Genesis is at least *worthy* to be the Hymn of Creation. But the knowledge Religion brings is not that which can be had elsewhere and in other ways; it does not set itself to correct the latter as such; it has criteria of its own, its own evidence, its own range of experience, but if it claims for God the things which are God's, it concedes to all lower, earthly powers the things which legitimately belong to them.

10. It is to be noted, further, as a fertile source of error in connection with this subject, that the tendency to ascribe to men who are eminent authorities in their own sphere an equal eminence and authority in other spheres is mistaken, even, it may be said, unjustifiable. A great statesman or soldier whose dicta in matters concerning his own profession would be received with merited confidence, propounds his views upon religion whether favourable or adverse, and immense importance is at once in many quarters attached to the declaration. A trained theologian saying the same things would be disregarded as a partisan. Yet in so far as Religion rests upon evidence, the judgment of those who have had to deal mainly with one class of facts is not more but less trustworthy when it is applied to facts of an altogether different nature. It is said with regard to the English courts of Equity and Common Law that a lawyer, whose training and practice have lain in one of these courts, becomes thereby less suitable to be raised to the bench of the other. If it be so with different branches of law, what must it be when the sphere is changed from

¹ Cf. Fisher, *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 478.

that of legal to that of philosophical, historical, scientific, or theological considerations? "The well-deserved eminence which men have attained in the field of physical science does not make their testimony in the least degree more worthy of weight than that of other men in the department of historical and critical evidence; and this for the obvious reason that they are entirely out of their special field. In the new field their special eminence counts for little or nothing; their testimony is simply that of an outsider, and not for a moment to be compared with that of even a very ordinary specialist in this department."¹ This is of course assuming that in the one department the man in question is a trained expert, while in the other he is more or less of an amateur. One who has seriously studied both departments may attain in each the authority due to the exceptional ability which he brings to both. This, however, can scarcely be said to be the case with the majority of those who enter the arena of antitheistic controversy.

11. Is it, however, a coincidence only that Physical Science has attained its highest development and made its greatest advances upon Christian soil, and in the hands, if not always of Christian men, at least of the men of Christian countries? It is, as has been remarked, "in the atmosphere of Christianity, amid the influences which Christian civilisation has originated, in the bosom of Christian society, that the amazing progress of natural and physical science in all its departments has taken place."² And if the authority of great names is invoked, it must be admitted that many of the foremost men of Science have been scarcely less remarkable for their Christian faith and life. The names of Brewster, Faraday, Forbes, Graham, Rowan Hamilton, Herschel, Joule, Balfour-Stewart, and

¹ Mair, *Studies in the Christian Evidences*, p. 14.

² Fisher, *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 461.

others have been mentioned as instances of recent or contemporary men of Science of the highest eminence, who have at the same time not been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.¹

12. It is accordingly to be hoped and believed that what has been called the conflict between Religion and Science is a passing phase of thought, partly due, as we have seen, to reaction, partly, no doubt, to pure misunderstanding. As the representatives of each department understand better the nature and limits of their own, as well as of each other's, investigations there should be a disappearance of distrust on the one side and prejudice on the other. Religion as an ineradicable fact of human nature cannot be incompatible with anything which Science is capable of teaching as to the world we live in. The difficulty is one not of fact but of interpretation. We have no reason to be afraid of Science so long as we trace God's hand in the marvels she makes known. The real danger is lest by filling up too much the sphere of our vision she shut God out from us, while our minds seek satisfaction in her infinite variety, and our energies become absorbed in merely secular aims and objects.

Law is God, say some ; no God at all, says the fool ;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see ;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He ?

¹ Romanes (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 137) argues from the diverse attitude to Religion of men distinguished in mathematical and physical science that "reason counts for very little in the complex of mental processes which here determine judgment," but he remarks that in his own time at Cambridge there was a galaxy of mathematical genius emanating from that place such as had never before been equalled. "And the curious thing in our present connection is that all the most illustrious names were ranged on the side of orthodoxy. Sir W. Thomson, Sir George Stokes, Professors Tait, Adams, Clerk-Maxwell, and Cayley—not to mention a number of lesser lights, such as Routh, Todhunter, Ferrers, etc.—were all avowed Christians."

CHAPTER III

REVELATION

1. THE result of a full examination of the evidence for the existence of God, and of a thorough-going criticism of the rival theories of the Universe, is that the Divine and human spirits are seen to be related to each other in virtue of a kindred nature, and of a common relation to the material or phenomenal world which affords to both an object of knowledge and a sphere for the exercise of will.

2. It has also been seen that Religion is essentially a communion between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man.

3. The question arises, Is the only **knowledge of God** that at which man has arrived, reasoning by his own unaided powers from the facts of external nature, the human mind, and history? Is Nature the only revelation of God? or may we not recognise a more direct influence of the mind of God upon that of man, in the form of a communication made, a guidance vouchsafed by the former to the latter?

4. Men who were formerly known as Deists, but who now call themselves Theists in a restricted

and, so to speak, sectarian sense, acknowledge the infinity and goodness of God, but deny that He has revealed Himself except through nature and conscience. This doctrine finds itself involved in **difficulties** when confronted with the problem of physical and moral evil.

5. Christianity meets these difficulties (*a*) in regard to physical evil, by laying stress upon moral rather than material ends, by setting the education and discipline of the spirit above mere happiness; and (*b*) with regard to moral evil, by emphasising the facts that moral beings could not exist apart from the possibility of moral evil, that a moral is higher than a non-moral existence, and that when moral evil actually appeared it was met by the power of God in redemption.

6. With the recognition of the existence of God and of the need of man in consequence of both ignorance and sin, the **probability** of a Revelation being given becomes very great. We find it impossible to believe that a Supreme Being who is good would leave man without needed guidance, and that One who is wise and powerful could not discover a method of affording such guidance.

7. The **possibility** of Revelation is illustrated (*a*) by the nature and value of knowledge acquired from other persons, as distinguished from that gained by our own individual experience; (*b*) by the training which a teacher is able to give to his pupil; and (*c*) by the relation of experiment to observation in scientific inquiry.

8. As communicated knowledge reveals at once

the ends toward which we should strive and the means of attaining them, enabling us to act in intelligent harmony with these ends, so **Revelation** aids and directs the development of the religious and moral nature in man.

9. The **claims** of any professed Revelation to be regarded as really such must be subjected to the following tests: (*a*) What amount of direct historical evidence can be produced in its favour—evidence that certain persons claimed to have received a Divine Revelation, and that they were not deluded or deceivers in so doing? (*b*) What amount of indirect historical evidence can be produced—evidence excluding every other known or probable explanation of what is alleged to have been revealed? (*c*) How far is the alleged Revelation borne out by internal evidence, by its own worthiness in substance and form, and its capability of being verified in our spiritual experience?

10. The claim of the Christian Scriptures to contain a Revelation from God must be tried by the application of these tests. Especially important is the character of Christianity as a whole, and the consideration that it is here or nowhere that such a Revelation has been given.

1. It is of course a mere outline of the Theistic argument or of a criticism of the Antitheistic positions which has been given in the preceding chapters. It is necessary also to remind the reader that neither in the one case nor the other is it claimed that the course of reasoning which has been or can be presented is absolutely conclusive. All we aim at is to arrive at the view which best accords with

all the known circumstances of the case, and which presents the fewest difficulties.

2, 3. When we are thus satisfied that the mind we discern in Nature is not simply a reflection of our own intelligence, but that mind answers to mind, that the spiritual within us is justified in its recognition of a spiritual without us, the further point remains to be considered, Is Nature the only Revelation of God? Is it only through the slow process of our gradual understanding of the natural world that we can know anything about Him? Much depends upon this. For it is not unreasonable to suppose that the difficulties which beset our reading of Nature might be obviated by further knowledge, if only there were another source from which it might be derived. And if God cannot make Himself known save through Nature, how can He help us on many an occasion of our sorest need when Nature is "blind and deaf to our beseeching"; and what in that case becomes of the *value* to us, not to speak of the *reality* of the religious life?

4, 5. Deists¹ maintain that to regard a Revelation as necessary is to imply that the Creator's work is imperfect and needs to be supplemented or rectified, and further that the giving of such a Revelation would involve a violation of that law of continuity and uniformity which lies at the root of all natural Science and is its indispensable condition. But to maintain this position they must assume that the system of things as we see it *is* perfect; for if it is not perfect, on what ground can the idea of a completing and rectifying scheme be pronounced impossible? They profess to believe in a God of infinite wisdom and love, but are quite unable to reconcile this belief with the indisputable existence of physical and moral evil. John Stuart Mill in a well-known passage of one of his Theistic

¹ See Note XIII. *Deism*.

Essays¹ arraigned Nature on a charge of pitiless cruelty. We may fully admit that his contention is one-sided, leaving out of account innumerable instances of benevolent adaptation; but still it must be acknowledged that if natural laws be all, and natural ends the only ends to be achieved, it is difficult to avoid the horns of Mill's dilemma by which we are called upon to reject either the power or the goodness of God. And what is true of physical evil is still more apparent when we turn to consider moral evil. Perfect as the system of the world may have been when it left the hand of its Creator, who can doubt in the face of daily experience that it has somehow gone wrong? Christianity recognises this. It holds that, while a moral being is one capable of self-determination, and while the power of choice cannot be without the possibility of choosing wrongly, it was yet not inconsistent with the goodness of a good and all-wise Creator to create moral beings, since a free and loyal service must be of greater value than that of a mere machine. But if any doubt yet remained as to the permission of evil being consistent with the goodness of God, it would be removed by the consideration that the bane was not without its antidote, that from the beginning there was a power of God able to enter the lists with the dark hosts of evil and to come forth victorious.

6-8. In the acquisition of ordinary knowledge we owe much to others; indeed we may be said to derive by far the larger part of our actual knowledge from this source and not from our individual experience. We have not each to begin at the beginning, we can build our edifice of knowledge upon foundations which have been provided for us. We are saved the long series of trials and failures through which the human race has passed. A similar service is rendered by every teacher to his pupil. The

¹ *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 28, etc.

pupil profits by the teacher's experience, and is led directly to his goal. There is much which no teacher can do for his pupil, an amount of labour, of receptivity, which the pupil must supply for himself, but he may at the same time be saved endless and often fruitless toil by following the instructor's guidance. This is the difference, to take another illustration, between mere observation of natural processes, and intelligently directed experiment. The same ground may be traversed, but with what added rapidity and directness in the latter case! Now Revelation has been described as "God manifesting himself in the history of the world in a supernatural manner and for a special purpose."¹ The nations might "feel after God" for ever without finding Him, or if they found Him, it would only be by long and painful effort. But as they become capable of receiving Him, He is found of them, the veil falls away, they know Him and emerge into the light of His truth. Revelation is a slow and gradual process because the nations have had to be educated to receive what God has to reveal; but how much slower must the process have been had the knowledge been only attainable through man's unaided efforts.² What a wise teacher therefore does for his disciples; what skilful experiment does for the scientific investigator; what the accumulated knowledge of the race does for each of us—directing, supplementing, and making more effectual our own efforts; this, if Revelation be a fact, God does in the highest region of knowledge.

9. The considerations which have so far been advanced have designedly been made independent of any theory of the mode, or any question of the accompaniments, of Revelation. Of the Miraculous as confirming the fact of Revelation we shall speak in the next chapter. It is

¹ Prof. Bruce, *Chief End of Revelation*, p. 57.

² See Note XIV. *Revelation as Education*.

enough for our present purpose if a man perceives a truth and feels persuaded that it has reached him from above. And when men have grasped thoughts new in the history of the world, when these thoughts have proved a light and power for all time, when they have been to those who received them, and to those who came after, the fountain of a new and higher life, is it an unreasonable theory that such men were taught of God, that influences more immediate than the mere suggestions of ordinary experience have been brought to bear upon them and have instilled this knowledge into them? This has from time to time been their own explanation; can we in view of all the facts pronounce it an unfounded one? It is important to note the tests that may and should be applied when such claims have been advanced. If we are satisfied that neither delusion nor fraud can be proved or rendered probable on the part of those who declare that they have received from God that which they deliver to others, we can scarcely refuse to accept their testimony, and to believe that their knowledge came to them in the way they have described. But further, we may appeal to the indirect historical argument. If, surveying the history of the world, we observe here and there ideas and conceptions of which the preceding history affords no adequate explanation; if we see slow and laborious progress in a certain direction followed by a sudden and unaccountable attainment of the end in view, our conclusion must be that this is due to some source above and beyond ourselves through whose activity we are being led as with paternal wisdom into the sanctuary of Truth. Our other line of confirmatory evidence for the reality of Revelation is found in the character of that which is revealed. We instinctively accept that which we perceive to be true, good, divine, as our spirits are stirred we know not how by the beautiful in nature and art. Our affections and

will spontaneously go forth to that which we recognise as worthy and noble. So far Revelation must be its own witness. It must shine by the light that is in it, by its own spiritual beauty, by its divine quality and its adaptation to the nature and needs of the soul.

10. It is only as they fulfil the requirements thus described that the Christian Scriptures can make good their claim to be the record of a Revelation given from heaven to men. We cannot here pause to enter into the questions now so earnestly debated as to the date and authorship of the books of Scripture. We take our stand upon the more general ground that in so far as Christianity can be shown to be, as a whole, unique, spiritually exalted, adequate to the needs of men, and different from anything which might have been looked for as the product of human thought and experience, it makes the existence of a supernatural element in Scripture all but indisputable; while it will be readily and generally admitted that if anywhere man has a Revelation from God, it is contained in the Bible.

CHAPTER IV

MIRACLES

1. CHRISTIAN Advocates do not argue in favour of the Miraculous for its own sake, but as evidence of the real and reliable character of the revelation, and of the Divine source of the power, manifested in Christianity.

2. At the present day the belief in Miracles is **assailed** upon three great lines of argument.

(1) The **first objection** is that they are in themselves impossible, being excluded by the conception of uniform natural law. In answer to this objection it is submitted—

(a) That the Miraculous presupposes an order of Nature to which it is related, and without which it could convey no special meaning to the mind of the observer.

(b) That in the existence of a personal God we have a cause whose operation Science can neither determine nor exclude.

(c) That material order should always be regarded as subordinate to moral ends.

(2) The **second objection** is that if Miracles were possible no evidence would be sufficient to

prove that they had taken place, and that as a matter of fact, no satisfactory evidence has ever been adduced for any alleged miracles. In answer to this we may urge—

(a) That from the nature of the case the evidence for Miracles must be historical and not experimental; that it is a question of testimony, and must be examined as such.

(b) That the argument that Miracles are contrary to “a firm and unalterable experience” unfairly excludes from experience the testimony which is under investigation. How can any experience be described as “firm and unalterable” when there is direct testimony to facts inconsistent with it?

(c) That the Christian Miracles have in their favour adequate historical testimony.

(3) The **third objection** is that an examination of the manner in which miraculous narratives arise,—combined with a conviction of the inflexibility of natural order,—has resulted in the growth of a sentiment which rejects all such narratives even prior to inquiry. In answer to this it may be remarked—

(a) That the sentiment referred to is confessedly a sentiment or predisposition, not a demonstration; and consequently, whatever its foundation, it cannot be accepted as final, but may be modified by circumstances being brought into view, which in the formation of the sentiment had been left out of account.

(b) That when *its* origin is in turn examined, it

is found to lie in the occupation of men's minds with material objects, and their absorption in secular interests.

3. With the **rejection** of Miracles, faith in the moral and spiritual character of the world-order and of its Author may not be altogether destroyed, but its rational foundation is seriously shaken.

4. Christian advocates do not profess to defend every alleged miracle, or even to defend each of the **Biblical Miracles** on separate and independent grounds. The latter may, however, be maintained as forming parts of a system the miraculous nature of which, in part or in whole, may be proved.

5. Crucial examples of the miraculous are the person and character as well as the resurrection of Christ.

1. It should be clearly understood that, when Christian advocates insist upon the recognition of a supernatural or miraculous element in connection with the origin and development of their religion, it is not from any unworthy superstition or for the satisfaction of a riotous imagination. They do not desire, any more than others, to represent the world as filled with irregularities and exceptions. Yet they have been constantly treated by their opponents as if this had been their attitude and aim—as if they thought that to establish certain facts as miraculous would be to make them more interesting and impressive. In reality, they have no wish to undervalue the achievements of Science, to deny that Reign of Law which modern Science has done so much to establish and illustrate; on the contrary, as we shall see, they recognise in this also a revelation of God. Were it not that they have reason to think that events

have occurred which cannot be accounted for by the ordinary action of natural laws, and that by these events a confirmation has been given to Christian truth and Christian belief which nothing else could have given, there would be no object in including the Miraculous among the Evidences of Christianity. But just as man leaves unquestionable traces of his presence upon the objects around him, so that they are appreciably different from what they would have been had his intelligence and will not been exercised upon them; as mind communicates with mind by impressing itself through its volitions upon the system of nature; so it is held that the Miraculous is a language by which the Infinite Being may speak more directly to the heart of man. If there be no evidence for it, of course we can but conclude that all that man knows of God is what he can gather for himself from the face of Nature; no presumption in its favour will cause it to be received in default of evidence. On the other hand, any presumption against such evidence on the ground of present observation of the course of Nature is fairly met by a consideration of the religious interests involved.¹ For example, one of the springs and principles of Religion is man's need of help when oppressed by the burdens and difficulties of life. But if there is no channel of communication between the Divine and human spirits other than the long chain of natural sequences, if there is no nearness of the one to the other but such as the contingencies of life—themselves the source of the difficulties of which man is so painfully sensible—express and allow, Religion seems an illusion and God might as well not exist at all. It has been truly said that a real answer to prayer, that is, any other answer than the reflex influence of the prayer itself, is impossible upon any theory which makes miracles impossible.

¹ See Note XV. *Miracles and Christianity.*

It is all very well to say that Nature is the expression of an Intelligence and Will, of a Personality behind and above Nature; the question is, Do this Intelligence and Will express themselves in any other way than through Nature, as man, for instance, expresses himself by modifications of natural processes which can in no other way be produced? If not, God is Nature, and Nature is God, with all that that implies. But man's conception of reality, of life, and of free activity, is derived from what he knows within and of himself. It is a God in like manner real, living, and freely active, that can alone satisfy his desires and needs. Man feels himself to belong to another world than the world of sense; is he wrong therefore in anticipating that some glimpses of that other world will be possible to him, that somehow and at some time the veil of the sensible will be rent, and the light of that which is beyond it shine through? And when we think of the overwhelming interest of Immortality,—that if man is not merely a Nature-existence, if this life is not his all, its prolongation after death must be under conditions of which the laws of Nature and the experience of the world can tell him nothing, an existence of which if it be real it is most important for him to be assured,—the probability that he will not be left in ignorance becomes very great. Apart from Revelation immortality is a mere vague hope—a hope against hope, a hope against all probability if the Naturalistic account of the world be the true one—a hope which the more earnest and candid of the recent representatives of the theory sadly try to persuade themselves and others that they can perfectly well do without.¹

2. (1) It is in one sense true that the mere possibility or conceivability of Miracles is not disputed by any school

¹ See Note XVI. '*Having no Hope.*'

of thinkers.¹ What is meant by the objection that Miracles are impossible is that the evidence for the uniformity of natural law is so great, so wide-reaching and irrefutable, that it is quite unnecessary to examine the evidence in favour of an alleged miracle which would, it is urged, introduce an element of uncertainty into a realm of uninterrupted order. But what is the true relation of these two ideas—Miracle and Natural Law—to each other? It is clear that Miracles presuppose a law of Nature to which they are relative and on which as a background they appear. If they were everyday occurrences they would cease to be miracles; and in that case not only would the everyday life and progress of mankind be interfered with, but special interpositions would cease to be full of Divine meaning. Again, given the existence of God, and even the sceptical philosopher admits that there would be an adequate cause for any unusual event. For if the world-order be arranged and upheld by a Personal Being, it cannot be denied that He has power to manifest Himself as such by adapting this order to some special purpose, and it is quite conceivable that circumstances may arise which will induce Him to exert that power. The only question is whether circumstances have ever arisen to justify such direct manifestations of Deity. But is not the moral higher than the material, are not moral interests to be preferred to natural uniformities? If there be a God whose great aim is the

¹ "Modern agnosticism is performing this great service to Christian faith; it is silencing all rational scepticism of the *a priori* kind. And this it is bound to do more and more the purer it becomes. In every generation it must henceforth become more and more recognised by logical thinking, that all antecedent objections to Christianity founded on reason alone are *ipso facto* nugatory. Now, all the strongest objections to Christianity have ever been those of the antecedent kind. . . . So far as reason is concerned, pure agnosticism must allow that it is only the event which can ultimately prove whether Christianity is true or false."—Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 166, 167.

education of moral and spiritual beings, miracles are not inconceivable.¹ With this end we may believe that God founded the material order, and for the same high end He may mould and modify it. Such a conception does not reduce the universe, as has often been asserted, again to chaos, or attribute caprice to the Deity; it merely asserts, what all wise philosophy and true religion will be found to assert, that the material is subservient to the moral and spiritual, that the object of living is to live well, and to grow in righteousness and holiness, and in nearness to the perfection of God.

(2) No evidence, it is said, can establish a miracle. If, by the evidence referred to, be meant such evidence as we have for a law of Nature which can at any time be put to experiment and verified, it is quite true that such evidence is not forthcoming. But it is in the very nature of the case that it should not be. A miracle is not a scientific fact, nor do we frame our conception of God as of a Being "constantly interfering with the course of Nature"; but if there be a God, a due appreciation of higher than material ends will render it not improbable to us that He may sometimes appear as taking a special part in the affairs of His own universe. What is really required is credible historical testimony. "But," said Hume, in his celebrated argument on this subject, "a miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a

¹ "The antecedent improbability against a miracle being wrought by a man without a moral object is apt to be confused with that of its being done by God with an adequate moral object. The former is immeasurably great; the latter is only equal to that of the theory of Theism, *i.e. nil.*"—Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 180.

kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish." It is clear, however, that such expressions as "violation of the laws of Nature" and "firm and unalterable experience" assume the very point which is under discussion. Laws of Nature are not violated by the introduction of a personal volition by which they are called into operation and adapted to a certain end; and experience ceases to be firm and unalterable in proportion as testimony is available that events inconsistent with its general tenor have taken place. The question of the evidence for the reality of the Christian miracles opens a large subject, and involves the history of New Testament times and the credibility of the writings which record it. We can only remark here that it is inconceivable that so vivid an impression of the person and character of Christ could have been conveyed by any who were not sufficiently near Him to be trustworthy witnesses of His miracles. And further, even though the Gospels could be shown to be collections of traditional narratives current in the Church a century or a century and a half after Christ, the objection does not apply to the Epistles of St. Paul. Of these Epistles, four—those to the Galatians and Romans and the two to the Corinthians—have practically been accepted by the most destructive of modern critics. The latest of these Epistles was written within a quarter of a century of the death of Christ; and from these the resurrection of the Lord and other miraculous facts can be established as clearly as any fact can be established by testimony. The whole life of St. Paul also, the whole existence of the Christian Church, are evidences for the reality of miracle, greater than which can scarcely be desired.

(3) The third objection is perhaps at the present day the most difficult to deal with. It combines, in a sense,

both the others. It rests upon the conception of natural law as contributing to the growth of a sentiment which tends to discredit all miraculous narratives, and creates a reluctance even to examine the evidence led in their favour; and in dealing with the evidence, it claims to explain its rise and growth, giving what has been termed the natural history of miracles. This position has been represented not only by one of the ablest of modern historical works,¹ but by one of the most popular of modern works of fiction.² Its widespread influence must be acknowledged. The difficulty in meeting it arises from the fact that there is so little common ground upon which an argument may be based. Still it may be asked—Is this not after all but a tidal wave of thought which is passing over the minds of men? This fixed idea of a continued and uninterrupted development, may it not be itself a point in the progress, and destined to give place to some higher thought, some more comprehensive idea? But this idea has itself an origin, and is susceptible of explanation. Mr. Lecky himself says—“The decline of the influence and realisation of dogmatic theology which characterises a secular age brings with it an instinctive repugnance to the miraculous, by diverting the mind from the class of subjects with which the miraculous is connected.”³ The admission is rife with important consequences, for by it we see that what is called “the spirit of the age” derives its character not from any profound reasoning, not from any natural necessity, not from any special regard for the interests of truth, but from the class of objects with which the mind of the age is chiefly occupied. In other words, the exclusive pursuit of secular aims—natural science, commerce,

¹ Lecky's *History of Rationalism*.

² *Robert Elsmere*.

³ *History of Rationalism* (crown 8vo edition), vol. i. p. 182. See Note XVII. *Rationalism and Miracles*.

luxury—any form of earthly ambition or absorption, makes the mind incapable of receiving, understanding, or even entertaining the idea of any Being higher than man, or any state of existence higher than the present. We refuse to be bound by a sentiment so derived, because we believe that those objects and interests from exclusive attention to which it springs are not the only objects and interests which the universe contains.

3. Modern free-thinking, we are reminded, “revolves around the ideal of Christianity, and represents its spirit without its dogmatic system and its supernatural narratives. From both of these it unhesitatingly recoils, while receiving all its strength and nourishment from Christian ethics.”¹ How long, we may ask, will it do so? History, whether of the world before or after Christ, does not encourage the belief that morality can long hold its own, when the sanctities of religion have been generally abandoned. Utilitarianism demands from men a greater stretch of unselfishness than Christianity ever dreamed of. Christ says, Lose the lower life and you shall find the higher. Utilitarianism says, Be content to lose both lower and higher. If Christianity has not won men in general to such self-sacrifice as it asks, will Utilitarianism be more successful? Atheists may preserve an enthusiasm for the “service of Man” in a society permeated and moulded by Christian ideals, but when these fade through the weakening of the forces which have sustained them, who can assure us that they will be anywhere reproduced?²

4. In treating of the miracles of the Bible, it is plain that many are of such a nature that they cannot be substantiated separately and independently, but only as members of a series, as parts of a system of which the

¹ *History of Rationalism* (crown 8vo edition), vol. i. p. 170.

² See Note XVIII. *Parasitic Morality*.

more important and prominent features are capable of such verification as historical inquiry can afford. If they evidently fall into line in the development of Revelation, and are not of a nature inconsistent with its general character and purpose, they receive the support which the system derives from its main elements. Here the usual criterion is in a way reversed; the strength of the chain is not that of its weakest, but of its strongest link; since the evidence available for the outstanding miracles creates a predisposition in favour of all those standing in organic connection with them. Scepticism, of course, argues upon the contrary supposition. It takes the most apparently aimless, least edifying, and most slenderly evidenced miracle it can discover in the Bible, and by the strength of the case which it can state against this, it would have us estimate the strength of its case as a whole. The device is legitimate from a purely strategical standpoint, but will not mislead any who come to the question in a spirit of fair and open investigation. The Christian advocate is entitled to take up his *strongest* position and say—Here are the grounds on which my faith rests, here is the evidence on which I maintain the historical basis and the reality of my religion.

(5) In the personality and character of Christ, and in His resurrection we have instances of alleged miracle. The evidence in favour of their miraculous character is indeed so strong that the whole question of miracle may be rested on the possibility of proving it in these cases. They will form the subject of consideration in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER V

PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST

1. THE supreme excellence of **Christ's character** is acknowledged by opponents of Christianity.

2. The **historical character** of the main outlines of the life of Christ and of His relation to the religion bearing His name is unquestioned, as also that the portraiture contained in the Gospels corresponds generally with the belief of the earliest Christians regarding Him. This portraiture is specially noteworthy—

(*a*) For its vivid life-like character.

(*b*) For its harmony and consistency.

(*c*) For its combination and reconciliation of opposite qualities or those seldom found united elsewhere.

(*d*) For its universal character, that is, the absence of national, class, and individual peculiarities.

3. This **portraiture** must be either an invention, or an idealised picture, or be drawn from actual knowledge of the person represented. But it was beyond the ability of the authors of the Gospels to conceive such a character; neither can it be

regarded as the product of forces at work in that age, which all tended to produce ideals of a totally different nature. The character of the Jesus of the Gospels is a strikingly original one.

4. If the claims which Christ puts forward in His own name are not justified, they evince a fanatical self-delusion of which there is no other evidence in the accounts which we have of Him, or they are fatal to His moral reputation.

1. Jesus Christ, it has been truly said, is Himself *the* miracle of Christianity. Our religion takes its origin from Him, and His personality and character are indelibly stamped upon it. That personality and character are unique. It is useless for the opponents of Christianity to criticise this or that miraculous narrative until they have first given a reasonable explanation of *His* being of whose glory they are but scattered rays, a being in whose presence the supernatural seems to become natural, the expression of His own exalted nature. It would not be of much avail for any Christian apologist to extol the beauty or depict the holiness of the character which the life of Christ, as narrated in the Gospels, reveals to us. It is better for our purpose to take the admissions of those who do not hold the same views as ourselves upon the matter now in hand. Dean Stanley, in one of his Essays (*Christian Institutions*, ch. xiv.), quotes, from a sermon¹ preached before a Scottish Synod, a series of admirably selected passages to show, as he says, "that the testimonies to the greatness of this historical revelation are not confined to the ordinary writers on the subject, but are even more powerfully expressed by those who are above the

¹ *The Witness of Scepticism to Christ*. By the Rev. P. M'Adam Muir, D.D., now Minister of Morningside, Edinburgh, and author of *The Church of Scotland; a Sketch of its History* in the present series.

slightest suspicion of any theological bias." Of these passages two may be given here. The author of *Supernatural Religion* says—"The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained or even attainable by humanity. The influence of His spiritual religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of His own character. Surpassing in His sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Châkyamouni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied though generally admirable teaching of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers, He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles, so that 'the imitation of Christ' has become almost the final word in the preaching of His religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence." The other is a quotation from John Stuart Mill: "It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews or of Nature, who, being idealised, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left,—a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His teaching."¹ That any one bearing the human name should be described in such terms as these by his disciples and followers might not be remarkable—even though we could be sure that they had not been betrayed by their partiality into the language of eulogy—but that such emphatic testimony should be given to the impression which he made upon them by those who would be the last to draw the natural inference from their own admissions is a fact to be pondered over. And it is to be noted that these

¹ See Note XIX. *Testimonies to the Character and Teaching of Christ.*

judgments were formed notwithstanding all that adverse criticism of the Gospels had been able to advance. Less critical perhaps, but not less significant, are the words of Rousseau—"If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God"; or those of Napoleon, when, in conversation with his suite at St. Helena, he had compared Christ with the heroes of the ancient and modern world including himself—"I think I understand somewhat of human nature, and I tell you all these were men, and I am a man; but not one is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man."

2. That the main outlines of the life of Christ are strictly historic there can be, and indeed is, no question. Besides the testimony of the Gospels and of the undoubted Epistles of St. Paul we have that of Jewish and Heathen writers. In the very beginning of the second century Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, testifies that in his province the Christians included many persons of all ages, of all degrees, and of both sexes, and that they met together "to sing hymns to Christ as to a god." This reference illustrates both the personal relation of the religion to Christ and the estimate in which his followers held him, confirming that which is given in their own documents and traditions both of earlier and later date. The Epistles of St. Paul already mentioned bring the general outline of the facts related concerning Jesus Christ, and the claims made on His behalf, within a period of some twenty to thirty years after the death of Christ. And the nature of the evidence is such as to make it indubitable not only that such a person existed, and that He was the founder of Christianity, but that the Gospels, which may not have been composed until some years later, represent in all important particulars what His followers believed from the beginning regarding Him. We have therefore a real person, and we have a portraiture of Him;

how far does this portraiture correspond with facts, how far is it to be relied upon? If this is a question which it is now impossible to answer by direct evidence, how, on the assumption that it is not historical, is its conception and construction to be accounted for? It is a fair argument that behind all criticism of the documents, behind all criticism of the history, there is the character of Jesus itself, the picture of the God-man who went about doing good, to be explained. If not the representation of an original, how did it arise? And if the representation of an original, how did He come to be? If in Christ we have a wonder of human nature, one of those advances upon all that has been elsewhere known or dreamt of—an advance such as nature and history, according to their modern interpreters, are incapable of making by themselves; we have that which may remove all reasonable doubt concerning the validity of the Christian revelation, and may assure us that in it a living Father in heaven speaks to the hearts of His human children, that in Christ a new life is manifested and a new hope given. Of this great portraiture of the Gospels there are several features which have attracted special attention. Of these we may notice—

(a) Its vivid life-like character. We feel that if not the very work of eye-witnesses, the Gospels must embody the accounts of those who were such. Their power largely consists in the way in which they bring us into the presence of Jesus, so that He moves before us,—imparting to the narrative a self-evidencing quality of its own. It was this that impressed even Goethe. “I esteem the Gospels,” he says, “to be thoroughly genuine; for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, and of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth.”

(b) Not merely the Holiness of Jesus in itself, but

the wonderful harmony and consistency of his character throughout. In ordinary human life there is a mingling of the high and low, the pure and the unworthy ; and in the products of human imagination, even when the evident intention has been to represent that which is lofty and noble, there has been an unavoidable taint perceptible, an apparent weakness and unworthiness. But as He moves across the sacred page, His actions not commented on but pictured and allowed to speak for themselves, there is in the case of Jesus only a uniform consistency of goodness, a goodness of the never-hasting, never-resting kind, untouched by any consciousness of sin.

(c) Another point is the union of opposite qualities in Christ's character, meekness and dignity, resolution and kindness, righteousness and pity, calmness and indignation—all that is most firm and authoritative in man, with all that is tender and patient in woman ; these have from the beginning evoked the wonder and commanded the admiration of men. They are component parts of a picture which surely none would have power to draw except from the life.

(d) And further in the same direction is the *universality* of his character. With its true humanity, with all its vividness of presentation, there is nothing narrow or limited about it. In point of nationality we fail to find in Jesus any of the distinguishing marks of the Jew of His time—He has neither the prejudices nor the exclusiveness of His nation. There is nothing even peculiarly oriental in His thoughts and teachings. He is not the representative of a class ; we forget in His presence distinctions of rank ; we see Him attracting to Himself men of every condition. He was free from all individual narrowness of spirit and of outlook ; the qualities which so distinctively marked the best of those who surrounded Him are lost in the harmony and breadth of His nature.

3. How then is this character to be accounted for? It has been justly said that three explanations only are possible; either it was a pure invention, or an idealised picture, or it was drawn from actual knowledge of the original. As to the first two suppositions it is almost enough to refer to the judgment of Mr. John Stuart Mill—"It is of no use to say that Christ is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. The tradition of His followers may have inserted all the miracles He is reputed to have wrought. But who among his disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good that was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source."¹ The favourite hypothesis of the present day is to represent the Christian Church itself as the myth-maker, the portrait of the Christ as the expression of the Christian feeling, which in turn is to be regarded as the product of the forces at work in the age in which Christianity arose. But nothing is more remarkable than the *originality* of the character of Christ when compared with all the known forces of that age. Dr. Matheson in an able Essay (*Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1878), after noting the marvellous unity of the portrait presented in the Gospels, asks whence this ideal was derived. He shows the impossibility of its being a product of Judaism. The universal character of Christ's spirit and nature is (as we have already seen) inconsistent with such a supposition. Could it be "from this intellectually narrow soil that

¹ See Note XX. *Is the Gospel Portrait an Invention?*

there emanated the most many-sided conception which has ever proceeded from any age in history?" He examines one by one the four ideals of the Gentile world. These are physical strength, intellectual power, æsthetic culture, and regal majesty, represented respectively by the Asiatic, the Greek philosopher, the Greek artist, and the Roman ruler. But neither singly nor in combination do they explain the Christian conception which is the essence of the Gospel narrative. This differs from, as it transcends, them all.

4. Are there no contrary voices as we listen to the general tribute of admiration paid alike by adherents and opponents of Christianity to the beauty and elevation of the Christian ideal? There have been among its opponents those who saw that to deny the superhuman character of Jesus, and to admit the virtual spotlessness of His moral character, placed them in a somewhat awkward and difficult position. Mr. Francis Newman, in his *Phases of Faith*, took up the challenge and impugned the moral character of Jesus on the ground of His having put forth claims which could only be excused on the supposition that they were justified. The charge was that He "claimed to exercise superhuman authority, and both demanded and received such honours and obedience and devotion as are due only to the Divine Being." We may fully admit that if these claims were baseless, Mr. Newman's conclusion falls short of the truth "that in consistency of goodness Jesus fell far below vast numbers of His unhonoured disciples." The point raised is one of supreme importance. On the face of the record lies the remarkable, the startling manner in which Jesus speaks of Himself, His mission, His significance for the world. Even though we confine our attention to the Synoptic Gospels, leaving the Fourth Gospel out of account,—even though we go no further than the Sermon on the Mount itself,—we have claims put forward which we cannot reconcile with the conscious-

ness of a weak, if not an erring, humanity. He taught as one having authority. He said, not—"Thus saith the Lord," but—"I say unto you." There is no need to multiply instances. No one superficially acquainted with the Gospel narratives can question that He advanced claims which, if there was nothing exceptional in His nature and His relation to God, can only be explained as the aberrations of self-delusion, or the misrepresentations of conscious deception. Both views have been maintained. Renan almost in the same breath extols the unequalled greatness of Jesus and declares that He availed Himself for His own purposes of the illusions of humanity—an "immoral eulogy," as it has been scathingly termed, "of alleged immorality." But none who have felt the "sweet reasonableness" of Jesus, who have observed the way in which He repressed false expectations in His disciples, and how He anticipated the end of His toils and sufferings, can imagine Him deceived, and still less, the deceiver of others. His words—taken as a revelation of His own consciousness, taken in connection with His blameless character which all the scrutiny of all the ages has not been able to charge with sin, taken in connection with what, as history reveals, He has been to man and to the world—present a problem which has only one possible solution. On Naturalistic principles would not Christ Himself be the most unaccountable phenomenon that even the Bible records?

"The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
 So the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
 So through the thunder comes a human voice
 Saying 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
 Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of mine;
 But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
 And thou must love me who have died for thee!"¹

¹ Robert Browning.

CHAPTER VI

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

1. THE question to be considered is, Can the faith of the primitive Church in the resurrection of Christ be explained on any more credible supposition than that the event really took place in some such way as is recorded in the Scriptures?

2. Looking first at the evidence for the **historical reality of the Resurrection** the following points are to be noted:—

(1) Among Scripture testimonies that of St. Paul is of special importance, as the first Epistle to the Corinthians is admitted by all to be authentic, and to have been written before any of the Gospels, at least in their present form.

(2) Besides the Scripture records, the existence of the Church, and especially the early institution of the Lord's Day, and of Easter day, are proofs of the nature and strength of primitive belief as to the Resurrection.

(3) Objection has been taken to alleged discrepancies and contradictions in the Gospel accounts, but these have not been found more difficult to deal with than might have been anticipated at such a

distance of time, with knowledge regarding many points necessarily imperfect.

3. The theories which have been advanced to explain the belief of the disciples of our Lord in His Resurrection, **without admitting its reality**, are—

(1) The allegation of the Jews that the disciples stole away the body. Besides the improbability of the story, it involves a systematic deception on the part of the early Christians which is inconsistent with the whole tenor of their life.

(2) The assumption that Jesus did not really die upon the cross. This is involved in improbability on physical grounds; it would include Jesus Himself in the system of deception on which the disciples entered, and it cannot account for the joyous hope by which the first Christians were animated.

(3) The Mythical theory—that of the gradual growth of the story in the imagination of the Christians—requires for its confirmation a longer time than is known to have passed before the Resurrection was proclaimed.

(4) The Vision theory, as represented by Renan, is inconsistent with the calmness and sobriety of judgment exhibited by the Apostles, and with the rarity, the regularity, and the early cessation of the appearances of Jesus. Besides, the conditions of expectancy, prepossession, and fixed idea, which are acknowledged as essential to the development of visions, are in this case wanting.

(5) Keim's theory of objective visions has no advantage over the traditional view.

1. In presence of undeniable facts of which a certain explanation has been traditionally given, the historian is bound to admit the explanation so generally received, or to offer another and more credible one. There is a presumption in favour of the traditional account, especially if it can be said to be contemporary, or almost contemporary, with the event itself, which forestalls the plea that the fact is simply inexplicable. The denial of the miraculous, which with writers of the negative school is an axiom, not to be proved but taken for granted, is, one cannot help thinking, as alien from the openness of mind and impartiality of judgment which ought to mark the scientific observer in nature or history as any of the mental attitudes which are so freely criticised when exhibited on the other side. The true student of history must be prepared to accept the facts which historical investigation brings to light, and in framing his explanation of them must not start with any preconceived idea of what they must be. There is a very extensive literature dealing with the question of the Resurrection of Christ. From all sides, negative and positive, and in all its aspects, it has been argued; the amount of discussion being indeed a fair measure of the recognised importance of the point at issue. We can here only summarise typical views and the more prominent features of the controversy. The difficulty itself cannot be better stated than in the words of Ferdinand Christian Baur, one of the most famous New Testament critics of the century. "Nothing but the miracle of the Resurrection," he says (*Church History*, Eng. Trans., vol. i. p. 42), "could disperse the doubts which threatened to drive away the faith of the disciples after its object into the eternal night of death. The question as to the nature and the reality of the resurrection lies outside the sphere of historical inquiry. History must be content with the

simple fact that in the faith of the disciples the resurrection of Jesus came to be regarded as a solid and unquestionable fact. It was in this faith that Christianity acquired a firm basis for its historical development. What history requires as the necessary antecedent of all that is to follow, is not so much the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, as the belief that it was a fact."¹ Very strange seems to us the plea that it is outside the sphere of historical inquiry to determine the reality or otherwise of an alleged historical event. Nothing can more clearly show Baur's consciousness of being unable to account on his own principles for what he yet found himself constrained to recognise as fact. Very different is the view which Keim takes of the duty of the historian. "How is this to be explained," he says (*Jesus of Nazara*, vol. vi. p. 323), "this vision, this living again, of one that was dead? . . . It may be that history cannot find such an explanation; but this should not prevent her from seeking it, instead of at once renouncing the task." And after offering his own explanation, he fairly demands, "Let those who ridicule present us with a better explanation."

2. (1) St. Paul's testimony is of special importance, because the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which it appears, was written prior to any of the Gospel narratives and to the Acts of the Apostles, and its authenticity is admitted by the most negative school of criticism. The mode, however, in which St. Paul alludes to the evidence, which he had obviously collected with much care, shows that, when he wrote, the belief was no new one, and makes perfectly credible the account of the later documents that it was within a few days after the death of Jesus that the new life began to manifest itself in the Christian community, and that it was through faith in

¹ See Note XXI. *Baur and Harnack on the Resurrection.*

the resurrection of Jesus that the disciples addressed themselves to the conversion of the world. Nor was it any isolated contact which they claimed to have had with the Risen One, but an intercourse of an intimate character extending over several weeks until He ascended from them into heaven.

(2) Besides the Christian Church as a whole,—which may be said to have been born on the day on which Christ rose from the dead, as the nation of the Israelites was said to have been born on the night of the Exodus,—there are two institutions which bear a noteworthy witness to the prevalence and power of the belief in the Resurrection. One of these is the change from the seventh to the first day of the week as the day of rest and worship, an observance which can be traced back to Apostolic times, and which was certainly due to the belief that on the first day of the week Christ had risen, and had on that day generally appeared to His disciples in the period between the Resurrection and the Ascension. The other witness is Easter, the yearly festival by which the Resurrection was specially commemorated, and which, as a day of the greatest triumph and rejoicing, can also be traced back to very early times.

(3) Many apologists have expressed themselves as unable to reconcile all the apparent discrepancies contained in the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection. Great difficulties undoubtedly exist, though many of those enumerated by Keim, for instance, can only be regarded as such if we suppose that each of the accounts was intended to be exhaustive. We need not indeed be surprised if it is now impossible to explain every particular consistently with the absolute accuracy of the narrators.¹ These testify to, and so far naturally reflect the excitement of the time; and in all probability no

¹ See Note XXII. *Discrepancies in the Narrative of the Resurrection.*

attempt was made to collect the experiences of the various witnesses until some time had elapsed. Apparent discrepancy in minor points may fairly be taken as proof that the narratives have either come down to us at first hand, or were immediately derived from those to whom the incidents occurred. They have not been edited, or forced into artificial agreement. If, notwithstanding, a fairly intelligible account can be woven out of them, without straining either language or probability, we may claim that the objection on the score of apparent contradictions is largely discounted. A very learned, ingenious, and on the whole successful attempt to do this is that of Principal J. B. M'Lellan in his *New Testament*, vol. i. It is not claimed that such Harmonies, as they are called, show how the incidents actually occurred, but that they meet objections by showing how they may have occurred on the supposition that our Gospels are to be trusted.

3. It remains to glance at the different sceptical theories of the Resurrection which have been suggested.

(1) The Jews accounted for the empty grave by saying that the disciples had come while the soldiers slept and stolen the body away. Even if this was possible, the whole life and work of the apostles is against it. If one thing is apparent from the accredited traditions, it is that, in their belief in Christ Risen, the disciples were absolutely sincere.

(2) The theory of Apparent Death is an aggravated form of that just referred to. It makes Jesus art and part in the deception which was practised upon the world; and if inconsistent with what we know of the character of the disciples, was much more inconsistent with the character of their Master. Apart from this, however, Jesus was officially certified as dead before He was removed from the cross. And the disciples were quite capable of distinguishing between resuscitation and resurrection.

(3) The Mythical theory is the favourite resort of a considerable number of negative critics. Some have said that in the Gospel narratives of the Resurrection we see a myth in the process of formation. Myths, however, like geological strata, require *time* for their formation. Whatever might be the case with certain details, regarded on this theory as mythical embellishments, there was no time for growth so far as the belief in the Resurrection itself was concerned. Besides, the Resurrection doctrine of the Apostles was quite different from any which had previously been held. It was evidently formed in accordance with their own experience. Christ Risen was to them at once the pledge of a future life and an interpretation of its nature.

(4) The Vision theory is that which has been most widely held by those who reject the supernatural explanation. It was adopted by Strauss in his second or popular Life of Christ. Its most developed and famous form is that in which it appears in the works of Renan, the French sceptic. Though cast down and sad, the disciples, according to Renan, were not destitute of all hope. They could not believe that their Master was dead. They were in the state of mind when the veriest trifle might turn them this way or that. The impulse was given when Mary Magdalene visited the grave of Jesus. She had the "glory of accomplishing the resurrection." The open grave struck her with astonishment, she fancied she saw the Master standing near. It was the beginning of similar imaginations. One after another of the Christian community took to seeing visions of the risen Jesus which they mistook for realities. The delusion spread and became more definite; the Church was based upon it, and all her activities inspired and moulded by it. "Surely," as it has been justly remarked, "this theory, if true, involves a miracle as great as the Resurrection itself."

No one has more carefully and powerfully criticised the Visionary hypothesis than Keim, at least in the form of visions due merely to the fancy or imagination of the disciples. He points out that too much is often made of the credulous character of the apostolic times, and the tendency to visionary experiences. "Side by side with this," he says, "there is still more of calm consideration and sober reflection to be seen in the action of all the Apostles." He also lays stress upon the orderly and regular character, and especially the early cessation, of the visions of Christ, by which they were distinguished from analogous examples to which he refers. Still further he points out that the visions not only came to an end, but even made way for a totally opposite mental current. The Apostles passed at once from the visions to the clear recognition of the mission entrusted to them and to the definite and heroic resolution to devote themselves to it; in other words, their transition to vigorous activity was the direct consequence of their attaining the knowledge of the victory and glory of Jesus. To these observations it may be added, that on ascertained psychological principles, before even the most credulous will see visions and mistake them for realities, one or other of these mental conditions is absolutely necessary, namely, prepossession, fixed idea, and expectancy. Now it is certain that the prepossessions and fixed ideas of the disciples had been in favour of an earthly Messiahship and Kingdom. And after the crucifixion they were expecting anything rather than resurrection. They could not and would not believe the tidings which were brought to them. Only Christ's own frequent and palpable appearance convinced them of the fact.

(5) Keim, holding that History must leave the ground of the belief in the Resurrection an insoluble riddle, thinks that Faith may find rest in an explanation which he suggests as his own. He believes in visions, but in

divinely sent, and so far true, objective, visions. The difficulty which he seeks to overcome in this way is the idea of a bodily resurrection. Evidence of the continued existence of the Crucified was needed, though all that was needed. But for this, he says, "the greatest of men would have passed away and left no trace; for a time Galilee would have preserved some truth and fiction about Him; but His cause would have begotten no religious exaltation and no Paul." . . . "The evidence that Jesus was alive was necessary after an earthly downfall which was unexampled and which in the childhood of the human race would be conclusive; the evidence that he was alive was therefore given by his own impulsion and by the will of God. The Christianity of to-day owes to this evidence, first, its Lord, and next, its own existence." Thus is negative criticism driven by force of circumstances into a position divided by an extremely narrow, though all-important difference, from the traditional faith of the Church. It may confidently be asked whether, in the face of all the difficulties which have been raised on this subject, it has any real advantage over the traditional belief.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

"Declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

CHAPTER VII

THE LEADING PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY, DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL

1. As a **doctrinal system** Christianity sets forth thoughts on such subjects as God, man, sin, and salvation which are in their main characteristics reasonable and worthy, and reconcilable with advancing knowledge. It is difficult to account for the purity and elevation of such conceptions if we have regard to the position and circumstances of those who were its first adherents and advocates, and look upon it as the result of merely human agencies.

2. The **moral character** and power of a religion is rightly made a test of its claim to acceptance.

3. The points which we require especially to keep in view when we examine the moral side of a philosophy or a religion are:—

(1) Whether it shows a full understanding of the moral condition to be dealt with,—the extent of the moral disease requiring remedy.

(2) Whether it is formed on a right method, being based on a clearly apprehended principle and constituting an organised whole.

(3) Whether the precepts which it supplies are the highest possible, and founded on a principle capable of indefinite application.

(4) Whether it is a morality applicable to all mankind and not a rule for a few only.

(5) Whether the standard it proposes is the highest conceivable, both in regard to individual virtues and to their combination and harmony as presented in an ideal character.

(6) Whether it is provided with sanctions or motives sufficient to ensure attention to its precepts, and to cause it to exercise a living and permanent influence upon men.

4. The **parallels** adduced from other ancient ethical systems for the purpose of discrediting the originality of Christian teaching are generally detached precepts selected from among many others of an opposite character, and can be traced to the exceptional excellence of individual natures.

5. Christianity combines in a unique manner Worship and Doctrine with Morality, finding in the former the most efficient means for the furtherance and support of the latter.

1. The proof of the Divine origin of Christianity, derived from the quality of the guidance it affords to human thought and action, yields in importance to no other line of evidence. If the ideas it embodies are worthy and reasonable, and if it is efficient as a guide of life, objections to it are obviously deprived of much of their force; while if its adaptation to its purpose in these respects is so remarkable that it can with difficulty be reconciled with the theory of a purely human origin of Christianity, we have an argument in favour of our religion

which all can appreciate. Let us look then at some of the thoughts which lie at the basis, and are interwoven with the substance of Christian teaching. Take the Christian view of *God*, equally removed as it is from Polytheism, Dualism, and Pantheism. God is one; His attributes are not broken up and scattered among a multitude of finite possessors. He is the Author of all things, the Creator as well as the Ruler of the world; His action is not fettered by conditions which are independent of Him. And while He is in the world, as its life and motive force, He is not limited by it. In the Christian conception of the moral character of God justice is not sacrificed to love, nor love deprived of all moral significance by being divorced from righteousness,—surely a worthier thought than that of mere Power, of a capricious Deity, or even of the stern Nemesis, the Vindicator of outraged Law. And when we think how the Christian conception of God has proved itself capable of assimilating fresh elements, how the discoveries of sciences such as astronomy and biology have only filled it out—made it more imposing and intelligible, we must admit that we have here a doctrine with which philosophy has nothing that can be compared, nothing by which it can be superseded. In its view of *Man* Christianity occupies a position equally secure from the charges of superficiality and onesidedness. It neither unduly disparages nor unduly exalts human nature. It gives due weight to all the elements of man's complicated being. Its doctrine of *Sin* traces the evil to its root in a self-centred will alien from truth and God, not in the mere impotence of the flesh, or the limitations of an earthly existence. And its teaching as to *Salvation* explains why, when the systems of philosophy, the great thinkers and teachers of old times, had done their best, and had failed to stem the corruption of society, or bring peace to the human soul, the doctrine of Jesus came as a glad

evangel, healing the broken-hearted and setting the prisoners free. That God and man should no longer be apart—that the Divine should enter into humanity, and be identified, as it were, with its experiences and destinies: that the righteous God loved still His wandering and disobedient child, and was willing to buy back his allegiance by the greatest of sacrifices,—this was a conception which could not fail, if accepted, to have a redeeming, a lifting power, upon the soul to which it came. Apart altogether from the truth contained in these representations, as *thoughts* they are purifying, elevating, and stimulating to a degree which cannot be ignored even by those who would hesitate to accept them and trust to them,¹ Even intellectually regarded, therefore, Christianity occupies no mean position. It has been justly argued that a system which men of powerful intelligence have spent their lives in studying and elaborating, which has, century after century, been the subject of investigation and debate, must comprise within it a mine of thought. Looking then, it is asked, “at the human originators of this teaching, at the prophets of the old dispensation, at the Apostles, at the Teacher of Nazareth, how can this body of conviction be accounted for? How did Israelitish seers, some of whom were called from the plough, how did fishermen who had just left their nets, how did a young villager from a carpenter’s shop in Galilee, arrive at these lofty thoughts of God and duty, and all the topics which enter into the Christian system? . . . How happens it that, in intellectual value, the impassioned utterances of Hebrew seers, the simple sayings of unlettered Jewish preachers, the aphorisms of the youthful Jesus, who was a stranger to the lore of even Rabbinical schools, so far outstrip the consummate products of philosophical genius?”²

¹ See Note XXIII. *Elevation and Attractiveness of the Christian System.*

² Fisher, *Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 366.

2. The value of Christianity as a *moral system* is, if not more conspicuous, at least more generally and readily acknowledged as an evidence of its exceptional worth than the purity and elevation of its religious ideas. It is not unnatural that the ethical character and power of a religion should be made a test of its claims to acceptance. Practice is the proper test of theory, and while the truth of propositions, or the reality of conceptions which have been formed, may be doubted, there can be no question of their bearing upon moral life. And it is well to remember that the need of a Divine Revelation is chiefly moral. Our ignorance requires enlightenment, and our liability to error, guidance. Sin has made a separation between our souls and that which is good and holy. Only the Divine hand can heal this moral schism; from the abyss of sin and depravity only the strong hand of God can effect a deliverance. When therefore a religion presents itself claiming to afford the needed light and help, there are two points as to which it is necessary to satisfy ourselves—first, that the moral guidance and power were not otherwise accessible; and second, that this religious system is thoroughly adequate to the end desired. In other words, we have to ask, What the requirements are of a sound and satisfactory ethical system; how far these have been satisfied in non-Christian systems; and how far they have been fulfilled in Christianity.

3. It is impossible within our limits to expand and illustrate the various statements made under this head, and it is noteworthy that the proof of these statements must consist largely of illustration. A few remarks, by way of indicating their general character, must suffice.

(1) That is no adequate doctrine which affects only the surface and not the deep-seated springs of moral life, as the physician cannot rightly prescribe for a disease

of which he has an imperfect knowledge. There have been peoples which, at certain stages of civilisation, have exhibited an almost child-like unconsciousness of evil, such as the Hindus of the Vedic period, or the Greeks as depicted in the poems of Homer. At this stage the moral faculty is not yet awakened, and moral problems are not realised as such. In other cases we have a one-sided development, as in the teaching of Socrates, and especially in that of Stoics who certainly touched the high-water mark of ancient pagan morality. Yet the Stoics recommended not only that the emotions should be controlled by reason, but that they should as far as possible be eradicated. Epictetus forbids grief at the loss of friends, and compassion for the unfortunate—the misery of others is to be nothing to us. Christian morality is indeed the only one which gives due weight to the various departments of human nature. It ventures to exhibit the true nature of sin, because it alone is provided with a remedy. It presents the ideal in its purity and fulness because it alone can hold out a prospect of its being realised. Nowhere else do we find so wide and true a view of the work to be accomplished in the regeneration of human nature, and of the conditions under which it must be carried out.¹

(2) A true ethical system must be formed in a correct and truly scientific manner. Every science is based upon some one idea or principle by reference to which its facts are classified and interpreted. Thus chemistry is the

¹ "All this may lead on to an argument from the adaptation of Christianity to human higher needs. All men must feel these needs more or less in proportion as their higher natures, moral and spiritual, are developed. Now Christianity is the only religion which is adapted to meet them, and, according to those who are alone able to testify, does so most abundantly. All these men, of every sect, nationality, etc., agree in their account of their subjective experience; so as to this there can be no question. The only question is as to whether they are all deceived."—Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 152.

working out of the idea of Affinity, political economy of the idea of Value. Morality in general rests upon the idea of Right, but Christianity gives a special meaning to the Right—it is that which is in accordance with the law of Love, and, still more definitely, with devotion to the person of Christ. Working from this centre all its precepts and injunctions are elaborated; by this they are tested.¹ As a system Christian morality is a unity; it is not disjointed, but progressive, and constitutes an organised whole.

(3) It is not enough, however, that it should lay down a general principle; this requires to be applied to the various circumstances of human life and phases of human action. By the rules formulated for this purpose the primary principle of the system may itself in turn be tested, since one which does not furnish precepts for every case is not sufficiently radical, and one which does not furnish the highest rules is not sufficiently pure, to be the foundation of a perfect system. We can apply this test in two ways. As any ethical scheme is already to some extent developed, we can look both to the nature of the guidance it has already afforded, and to its possibilities, that is, to the guidance it is capable of affording in circumstances which had not arisen when it was first set forth, and in the earlier stages of its growth.

(4) A perfect ethical system must be a universal one, capable of being received and acted upon by all—not confined in its influence to a few, while the mass of mankind are left to struggle onwards unaided by it. Here it was that the noblest philosophies of antiquity were especially deficient. The morality of Plato was one not for the multitude but for the few select souls. But Christianity is a religion for all; its fundamental

¹ See Note XXIV. *Pagan and Christian Ethics.*

principle is one capable of influencing every human heart ; it demands no special qualifications, it offers no exclusive privileges ; the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, are equally welcome within its pale if they submit themselves to its conditions. "The savage who can do little else can wonder, worship, and enthusiastically obey." (*Ecce Homo.*)

"Though truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin—

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

(5) An ethical system must present a standard—an ideal to be imitated, and this must be the loftiest we are capable of conceiving. It has been justly pointed out that it is in the elevation and purity of this ideal rather than in the discovery of new precepts that the progressive character of morality is to be seen. If now we compare the professed ideal of any ancient system with that which Christianity sets before us, we see at once the infinite superiority of the latter. The moral philosophy of Aristotle culminates in his character of the high-minded man. It is enough to say that his high-mindedness mostly springs from pride. The Wise Man of the Stoics—perhaps the loftiest character ever conceived by unenlightened human thought—was proud and apathetic. "It was reserved for Christianity," says Mr. Lecky,¹ "to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown

¹ *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. p. 9.

itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life."

(6) An ethical system ought to be provided with motives sufficient to ensure due attention to its precepts, and to cause it to exercise a living influence over the hearts and souls of men.¹ It is in regard to this point especially that ancient moral and religious systems show themselves defective. The fair maxims of ancient Greek morality come to men with no higher motive sustaining them than that of expediency or a dread of the Nemesis of the gods. Aristotle is utterly unable to say why the higher part of man's nature should assume supremacy over the lower. As popular morality declined, the most sublime sayings of philosophers fell without authority upon the ears of men. They still occasionally commended themselves to an individual mind of lofty tone, but to others they were mere sayings, admirable indeed but without influence. But Christianity founds all its precepts upon a personal love to a personal and living Saviour; it bases its morality on the revealed condition and destiny of man, and speaks with authority on his end of life. The philosopher could supply his followers with maxims, but he was unable to point to a living God and Father, a living Redeemer, an indwelling Spirit, a hope sure and certain of a glorious resurrection. The

¹ See Shairp, *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*, "The Moral Motive Power."

deficiency of sanction of the ancient systems is incontestably proved by the utter absence in their case of a renovating effect upon the life of the people,¹ while one of the earliest and strongest proofs of the power inherent in Christianity was the influence it so rapidly attained and continued to exercise upon the minds of all. "Among us," says an ancient Christian Apologist, "you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable to prove in words the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. They do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves."

4. An argument has frequently been advanced against the claims of Christianity as a moral system, founded upon the similarity of many precepts and sayings of ancient philosophers and moralists to those of Christ and Christian teachers. The fundamental error of this argument is the assumption that Christianity is merely, or mainly, a body or code of precepts instead of an organised system, whose life is in its foundation-principle of Love and Loyalty. The precepts quoted, however beautiful and excellent in themselves, are usually detached and have no connection with any general principle. Take, for example, the exquisite maxim attributed to an Indian sage:—"Let the honest man suffer the blow of the wicked, as the sandal tree that, felled by the woodman's stroke, perfumes the axe that wounds it." In what does this go beyond—"Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you"? And did the Hindu ever carry out his precept, ever enforce it by an example like that of Him who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for

¹ See Note XXV. *Moral Failure of Buddhism.*

they know not what they do"? Many such parallels have been cited from Greek, Chinese, Persian, and Indian sources, from the Talmud and other ancient writings; but while we admit the similarity, we perceive that their religious force is lost for want of a basis in principle; they remain separate and detached, they "hang in the air." Then, again, it must be remembered that such precepts are selected from among many others, the large majority of which bear an entirely opposite character. The beautiful sayings which, in a celebrated article, the late Mr. Deutsch collected from the Talmud, are thus lost in a mass of external and frivolous injunctions. And even the precepts which we admire so much are often the strokes of individual genius, the product of keen ethical discernment. Men differ from each other in moral as well as in intellectual capacity. The comparatively pure and elevated morals of an Epictetus, a Marcus Aurelius, a Buddha, evidently sprang in large measure from the personal character of their authors; and for those who did not share this character, the precepts remained beautiful but empty forms.

5. "One of the first facts," says Mr. Lecky, "that must strike a student who examines the ethical teaching of the ancient civilisations is how imperfectly that teaching was represented, and how feebly it was influenced by the popular creed." The importance of a close union between morality and religion is obvious. In Greece it was the development of moral thought which broke down the old mythology. It was the moral value and power of the thoughts which lay at the basis of Christianity that commended them to the consciences and minds of men. "Unlike all pagan religions, it made moral teaching a main function of its clergy, moral discipline the leading object of its services, moral dispositions the necessary condition of the due performance of its rites. By the

pulpit, by its ceremonies, by all the agencies of power it possessed, it laboured systematically and perseveringly for the regeneration of mankind. Under its influence doctrines concerning the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, and the duties of man, which the noblest intellects of antiquity could barely grasp, have become the truisms of the village school, the proverbs of the cottage and the alley.”¹

“ And so the Word had breath and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than all poetic thought.”

¹ *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. pp. 2, 3. See Note XXVI. *Lecky on Pagan Ethics*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EFFECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD

1. THE results attained by the Christian religion—the new spirit which it has implanted in the world, its influence in purifying and elevating the social life of man—are unique in kind and afford presumptive evidence of a higher than human origin.

2. It is only proper to admit that the modern world owes something to pre-Christian elements, and something to the influence of race; also that the representatives of Christianity have often been false to its spirit.

3. Christianity has proved itself possessed of an exhaustless creative, recuperative, and rectifying power when other religions have declined and disappeared.

4. The new spirit introduced by Christianity is the spirit of **Humanity**, of the brotherhood of man, in its various applications.

(1) Christianity has assigned a higher position to **woman** than any other philosophy or religion; it has imparted a new sacredness to marriage, has raised the standard of personal purity, and abolished systematic infanticide.

(2) Christianity did not at once forbid **slavery**, but undermined the system by its great principle of brotherhood, and gradually led to its abolition. Under the influence of Christianity the gladiatorial combats and other cruel and licentious sports were abandoned.

(3) Christians from the first manifested a spirit of **charity** even toward those who were not Christians, and proved their sincerity by many acts of devotion. Hospitals and other institutions of mercy we owe to Christianity.

(4) Christianity tends to abolish **war**, and has succeeded in mitigating some of its most painful accompaniments.

(5) Christianity has abolished torture, advanced education, encouraged a spirit of chivalry, and given new life and range to art and general culture by enlisting them in the service of a great ideal.

1. By comparing Christianity in certain of its aspects with the moral teaching of other religions and philosophies, we have been able to see how far it goes beyond these in purity and power. One thing seems still wanting to complete the argument, namely, to show, not only that the truths and principles of Christianity commend themselves to our minds and hearts by their elevation, purity, and universal applicability, but that this religion has achieved such a work in the world, has exerted such an influence upon mankind and upon history, as shows it to be no beautiful theory, no dream, but a practical power, proved to be so by unchallengeable testimony, the witness of experience.

2. To avoid exaggeration in connection with such an inquiry as the present, there are some points which it is

necessary to bear in mind. We must not, for example, underestimate the elements of life and thought which are discoverable beyond the pale and before the rise of Christianity. Dark as the picture often is, it is not all dark; many most valuable possessions have been received and assimilated by the Christian ages from those which went before. Much also is due to the influence of Race. If we believe that it is not accidental that Christianity has found a home among the peoples which are physically and mentally best fitted to lead the van of the world's progress; if we believe that Christianity accepted has done a vast amount to develop the natural gifts and capacities of these peoples; we must not forget that nature here counts for much, that the flourishing tree is due to the soil as well as to the seed sown in it. We must also bear in mind that influences have been exerted in the name of Christianity which did not really contribute to human progress and elevation. Christian doctrine has suffered from intellectual misapprehension, Christian practice from perversion, the Christian spirit from contact with tendencies springing from a different source and having a different aim from its own. The candlestick has not always borne the light, which oftentimes has glimmered in unexpected quarters; the truth has been cherished in lowly hearts while men looked in vain for guidance to its official representatives.

3. Making every allowance, however, we cannot but be struck with the fact that the world apart from Christianity has always shown, and still continues to show, a marked difference from the world enlightened by Christian truth and animated by the Christian spirit; that Christianity is the acknowledged religion of the highest races of mankind; that it has proved itself not only reconcilable with, but the spring of the highest civilisation man has known; that however antagonistic

modern science, by some of its representatives, may profess itself to Christianity, it is under its shadow that science has grown up and obtained a freedom and an influence never known before; that not only is the ideal of Christianity the loftiest which history reveals, but that the characters which it has formed, the institutions to which it has given birth, the actual results achieved by it, are unparalleled in the history of the world. If all this be no more than a coincidence, it is in the highest degree remarkable, but the more closely we look into the matter, the more we are convinced that there is more here than a mere coincidence, that the roots of our modern life are inextricably intertwined with Christianity, and that the influence of the latter upon individual and social life can be clearly traced in the gradual but inevitable transformation which has been effected. Besides its power, perhaps because of its power, of adapting itself to all conditions of human life and all stages of human advancement, Christianity has ever shown an exhaustless recuperative energy. When it has seemed dead, it has shown that it retained a germ of life; when it has wandered under mistaken guidance into wrong paths, it has been able to correct the error, and throw off the false growth. Other religions have exhibited what has been called "an arrested development"; the force which initiated them has been exhausted; the personal influence, the social movement, to which they owed their origin, have in time died away, and the religions have died with them. We see the process going on in not a few cases in our own day while Christianity flourishes with a life and vigour never surpassed at any previous period.

4. We are not now dealing with any one form of Christian philosophy or belief, or with any special Church organisation; but, meaning by Christianity the power of Christ's life and teaching as set forth in the gospels and

epistles of the New Testament, we ask what has been the moral effect of the introduction of Christianity into the world? This may be summed up almost in one word—*Humanity*. Bright as was the light shed by Christ's life and teaching upon the first and greatest commandment, that which requires love to God, the work which it did in setting next to it the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was hardly less significant. "It was Christianity," says Max Müller,¹ "which first broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and barbarian, between the white and the black. *Humanity* is a word which you look for in vain in Plato or Aristotle; the idea of mankind as one family, as the children of one God, is an idea of Christian growth; and the science of mankind, and of the languages of mankind, is a science which, without Christianity, would never have sprung into life." We shall take as illustrations of the results of Christianity in this direction a few facts regarding the position of Woman, Slavery, Charity, and War.

(1) It may be said that no portion of the human race owes a heavier debt to the religion of Christ than *Woman*. Wherever might is recognised as the sole foundation of right, wherever selfishness is paramount, the weaker sex must suffer, and does suffer. There have no doubt been honourable exceptions to the general treatment of women in non-Christian lands. The Roman reverence for women is celebrated in many passages of their legend and history, and a healthier feeling is recorded to have been characteristic of the great Teutonic race in the earliest times. Yet under the old Roman law the husband had the power of life and death over the wife, and marriage among the German tribes was an absolute tyranny on the part of the husband which often ended in cruelty and bitter

¹ *Science of Language*, vol. i. p. 127.

oppression. It is said that the phrase "buy a wife" for "take a wife," was still used as late as the Middle Ages in many parts of Germany. It was one of the objections to Christianity raised by its early enemies that it assigned so high a position to woman. What her position was in ancient Greece, in Mohammedan countries, and in every non-civilised nation, is too familiar to need repetition. She owes it to Christianity that she is not altogether either the drudge or the plaything of the stronger sex. From the first, women exercised great influence in the Church; they were among the most earnest missionaries, the most devoted martyrs of the faith. Marriage became a union into which both parties entered on equal terms, and though some of the regulations and counsels of the Church operated in a less friendly direction—as, for example, the exaltation of celibacy,—it was by Christianity that family life was purified and strengthened during the period in which European civilisation was taking shape, and of that benign influence we now reap the fruits. It is only gradually that all this has been brought about, but that it was already in germ from the first is evident from the saying of an Apostle who was neither altogether free from the prejudices, nor inclined wantonly to attack the customs of his age on this subject—"In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, *neither male nor female.*" In the teaching of the Gospel, it has been said, "there is nothing of the proud exclusiveness which left one sex entirely out of the consolations and the elevating influence of philosophy; the same strait gate must be passed by all, the same narrow way must be trodden by all, the same eternal home is opened to all."¹ It is necessary to refer briefly to two other points closely connected with this subject; these are the conception of Personal Purity, and the

¹ See Note XXVII. *Christianity and the Relations of the Sexes.*

abolition of Systematic Infanticide. When we grieve over the continuance in our social system of evils which seem to us incurable, it is well to remember that ancient moralists expressed themselves in an equally hopeless manner regarding forms of vice which are now practically unknown, and, in his ideal Republic, even Plato counselled the exposure of children as a social necessity, apparently unconscious of the sin and crime with which modern law and feeling brands what was a common ancient custom. The simple mention of these facts is sufficient to indicate the immense strides which society, under the influence of Christianity, has made in regard to these important points.

(2) With respect to *Slavery*, which was one of the most prominent features of the ancient world, it has been objected to Christianity, first, that slavery finds no explicit discouragement in the New Testament; and second, that down to a very recent period it was countenanced and practised by more than one Christian nation. Both accusations have a certain measure of truth. Christians have notoriously been in numerous cases inconsistent in their practice, yet it is hardly fair to charge this inconsistency upon their religion. And, in reading their Bibles, they have often failed to take account of time and circumstance, and so have read a counsel or precept as applicable to a different state of matters from that to which it was designed to apply. Now that slavery has been abolished, who can doubt that Christian principle was undermining it, and Christian teaching hostile to it from the first? In the Roman Empire during the early Christian centuries the evil existed in an exaggerated form; but society was founded upon it, and to have preached immediate and universal emancipation would have been to open the flood-gates of revolution; it would have been "the signal of servile war, and the very name

of the Christian religion would have been forgotten amidst the agitation of universal bloodshed." No condition, indeed, could be more miserable than that of those who formed the immense majority of every ancient state, who had no civil rights, could enjoy no legal marriage, had "no legal parentage, no property, no right to legacy; could sustain no action before a court, could not be a witness, and whose testimony was only legal with torture." In no department is the influence of Christianity more clearly shown than in the gradual mitigation of the lot of the slave, and the introduction of legal provisions for his benefit. The Church anticipated the state in the recognition of his rights as man and as citizen of the heavenly kingdom. "The Christian teachers and clergymen became known as the 'brothers of the slave,' and the slaves themselves were called 'the freedmen of Christ.'" Numbers of those who contended as gladiators in the arena, and were "butchered to make a Roman holiday," were prisoners and slaves. The mild contempt of the old philosophers availed little to discourage those inhuman but popular amusements, which were, however, vehemently denounced by Christian preachers, and finally abolished by an act of Christian heroism. In the year 404, when a great victory was being celebrated in the usual way, at the instant when the swords were drawn and the fighters were about to close in their deadly sport, a monk, named Telemachus, leaped down and threw himself between them. "The gladiators shall not fight," he exclaimed; "are you going to thank God by shedding innocent blood?" He perished beneath a shower of stones flung by the angry spectators; the very gladiators themselves, it is said, ran him through with their swords. But his end was gained. The eyes of the nobler among the people were opened to the sin and shame of their acts; the blood of a martyr was upon their heads; and never again was that fearful scene permitted. Another

way in which the Christian spirit attacked and triumphed over such institutions as that of slavery was by the stress which it laid not only on the negative but the positive side of the truth, by the manner in which it taught the value and true dignity of labour. Christ and his Apostles by word and example made this a prominent feature of Christian morals. Work became honoured under the new religion, and slave labour was worsted in the competition with the more productive toil of the free.

(3) Our next point is the development of the Christian spirit of *Charity*. Selfishness was the ruling principle of the ancient world. Love was the new, yet old, commandment introduced by Christianity. Christians realised the idea of brotherhood not only among themselves, but in their relations with their non-Christian neighbours in a manner at which the heathen could not but marvel. "When, in the terrible pestilences with which Carthage and Alexandria were visited in the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, the sick and dying were abandoned by their heathen relatives, it was by Christians that they were received and cared for." The poor became objects of compassion and sympathetic help. The history of the Church is truly a history of benevolent schemes and institutions. It may be fearlessly claimed as due to Christianity that, even beyond the pale of the Church, love to one's neighbour—"the Service of Man"—is acknowledged as the supreme guide of action. "Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue, giving it the foremost place in the moral type, and in the exhortations of its teachers. . . . Even in the days of persecution, collections for the relief of the poor were made at the Sunday meetings. . . . A Roman lady, named Fabiola, in the fourth century, founded at Rome, as an act of penance, the first public hospital; and the charity planted by that woman's hand overspread the

world, and will alleviate, to the end of time, the darkest anguish of humanity. Another hospital was soon after founded by St. Pammachius; another of great celebrity by St. Basil, at Cæsarea. St. Basil also erected at Cæsarea what was probably the first asylum for lepers.”¹

(4) *War* is one of the evils that afflict mankind which Christianity has not yet succeeded in suppressing. That such, however, is its tendency as well as its aim none can seriously doubt. We sometimes hear war defended on the ground that too long a period of peace brings about national effeminacy and corruption; that war is needed, like a violent storm, to clear the atmosphere, and may thus even contribute to progress. It is needless to say that true Christianity recognises no such necessity. There are other modes of strengthening the national character and checking the inroads of corruption. War is only justifiable when it is in the interest of justice. Every contest not necessary in defence of national independence or national possessions is a crime. But we look forward to the adoption of a course with regard to this question somewhat similar to that which has been followed under Christian influences in regard to private war and duelling. These have been displaced by a sense of justice and a willingness to appeal to properly and impartially constituted tribunals. So may we hope that nations will arrive not only at a far greater development of international law (itself a notable growth of modern times), but be inspired with a better feeling towards each other, and find in arbitration, or some such expedient, a means of satisfactorily ending disputes—

¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. pp. 84, 85. See also *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th Edition, vol. xii. p. 301—“Although in ancient times there may have been places for the reception of strangers and travellers, it seems at least doubtful if there was anything of the nature of a charitable institution for the reception of the sick, such as existed after the introduction of Christianity.”

“Till the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are
furl’d
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.”

Meanwhile, many of the most terrible features of warfare are mitigated by provisions of humanity and mercy; the Red Cross is seen and respected on every battle-field. Even here the hand is seen at work of Him whose advent was announced by angels as bringing “on earth peace,” and who was Himself the “Prince of Peace.”

(5) Further illustrations of this great subject, which must, however, be studied in works specially devoted to it, may be found in the history of the abolition of torture, in that of the progress of education, and in the growth of the spirit of chivalry, which has been described as one of the “fairest of the after-growths when the purifying flood had swept over the decaying empire and the stagnant Church—the results of which wave of Teutonic manliness and faith in goodness all the subsequent corruptions of civilisation have not succeeded in destroying.” One of the most interesting and instructive of the departments in which the power of Christianity has thus been manifested is that of its relation to Art and to the various forms of culture. To all of these Christianity has come as a means of extending and deepening experience, it has taught them to speak a new language; it has also given to life its unity by impressing upon it a moral purpose, by setting before it a great hope, and by making all its powers, opportunities, and movements subservient to the realisation of a great ideal, the coming of the kingdom of God. Christianity has proved itself an influence in the world, with which no other is comparable—the power of God unto salvation, not only to individuals, but in the social and national life of man.

CHAPTER IX

CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

1. BESIDES the separate force of the different lines of an argument, there may be a special cogency in the manner in which these distinct lines **converge upon a common centre**. This, in the case of Christianity, may be taken as one of the chief grounds of its acceptance by men of ordinary capacities, opportunities, and education.

2. The opponents of Christianity commonly seek to **isolate** the positions maintained by the Christian apologist in order to attack them more effectually.

3. The cumulative effect of the Christian evidences is of great importance in view of the unique character of Christianity and its place in the world.

4. The following points, in addition to those already considered, contribute to the formation of such a cumulative argument :

(1) The preparation for Christ in Israel.

(2) The appearance of Christ at the time when Messianic expectation was at its height.

(3) That the religion of Christ is coextensive with the civilisation of the world.

(4) The unity of plan and spirit in the books of the Bible.

(5) The confirmation of Scripture by memorial ordinances and institutions, as the Lord's Supper and the Church itself.

5. The evidence of Christianity with which all others will stand or fall is the impression produced by the **Personality of Jesus Christ**. All others must be regarded as subsidiary and supplementary to this.

1. It has been the aim in this manual to assume as little as possible that would not be generally conceded. Hence there are several branches of Christian evidence to which little or no reference has so far been made, notably those discussions which circle round the Bible as a book or collection of writings. Christianity being not only a spiritual but a historical religion, having its centre in a Person and its records in a Literature,—the nature of these records, their contents, and the history of their transmission, form no unimportant part of the general considerations by which it is commended to us. Much obviously depends on the date of the Gospel narratives, and their relation to each other as well as to the other writings of the New Testament; and all this is proper matter of evidence. Then there is the great subject of Prophecy, the correspondence of Prediction with Event, which, while it may be properly regarded as a special case of miracle, has features which practically constitute it a separate line of proof. But though we do not dwell at length upon these points, the mention of them may remind us that a force greater almost than that of any separate argument resides in the manner in which a number of different and independent lines of argument converge upon a common centre. Union is strength, as the proverb tells us, and “a

threefold cord is not quickly broken." Of the many forms and departments of Christian evidence, some will have greater cogency for one mind, while other minds will be more impressed by other arguments; but all must acknowledge the cumulative force and effect of all combined in one great argument. "Probable proofs," as Bishop Butler remarks, "by being added, not only increase the evidence, but multiply it." "The conviction arising from this kind of proof," as he elsewhere observes, "may be compared to what they call *the effect* in architecture or other works of art; a result from a great number of things so and so disposed, and taken into one view." In a criminal trial the guilt of the prisoner may be abundantly manifest, and yet it may be possible to show that each of the lines of proof by which it is established is by itself inconclusive. It may be safely said that it is by a process of reasoning such as that now indicated that an intelligent Christian of ordinary education and opportunities justifies his belief. He may not have the time nor the requisite ability and training to study closely and weigh carefully what may be advanced on the subject of religion. How is he, then, to have any intelligent faith at all? Is it not that while his hold upon any one line of evidence may be weak, the religion appeals to him on so many sides, that his faith acquires a solidity and steadfastness like that of a tree which sends down into the earth roots of which the fibres may be individually slender, but which by reason of their number, their interlacing, and the different directions in which they penetrate the soil, take a hold upon it which the stormiest breeze is not able to dislodge?

2. It is obviously the policy of the opponents of Christianity to ignore the cumulative force of the Christian evidences, and to treat each as if the whole burden of the argument rested upon it alone. Desiring to overturn the tree, they cut its roots fibre by fibre. Many

persons lose their attachment to Christian truth, and sink into scepticism, because they have allowed their minds to dwell upon one kind of difficulty and have left out of sight the countless considerations which this difficulty leaves untouched, and so, losing patience, for the sake of one difficulty abandon the whole body of truth. And what these do, it may be unwittingly, the foes of religion do systematically. They are well aware of the advantage of thus concentrating attention upon single points. If anywhere in the wide universe they can find a single fact which can be adduced as parallel to, or inconsistent with, any statement which seems to be in favour of Christianity, they direct attention to it, and believe that so far they have counteracted the effect of the Christian evidences. But the problem, as it has been justly said, "is not: Can we explain away this or that element by mere chance or natural causes? but, How do the elements all come to meet in one and the same centre? Was it by chance that all the military roads led to ancient Rome, or was it because it was the imperial city?"¹

3. The cumulative aspect of Christian evidences becomes of great importance when we consider that the religion of Christ is in a certain way a *unique* effect. There is nothing with which it can be compared. When we have, for example, a single instance of a form in nature, it is difficult to pronounce whether it is the outcome of law, or the result of chance or caprice. Only comparison can, as a rule, determine this question. But when the object is of complicated construction, and exhibits internal adaptations, a conclusion all but unchallengeable may be formed. To use, for a purpose somewhat different from the original one, Paley's celebrated illustration of a watch found in a desert,—on the supposition that it was the only specimen of the kind known, it is evident that any con-

¹ Mair, *Studies in the Christian Evidences*, p. 317.

clusion regarding it must be drawn, not from a comparison of it with other objects, but from a consideration of its several parts in their mutual relation and in their apparent unity of purpose. As soon as we discovered that the watch was capable of measuring time we should feel certain that it was constructed with this very end in view. It is on such grounds that the inference of a presiding intelligence in every similar case is based. And in proportion to the number of the parts, their complexity and the clearness of the purpose which they are in combination adapted to serve, is the confidence with which we rely upon the inference. It may be impossible, for example, to decide absolutely between those who hold that this is the best of all possible worlds (Optimism), and those who hold that there cannot be any worse than this (Pessimism), for the simple reason that this is the only world we are acquainted with, and our opportunities of comparison are therefore restricted. But the fact that we know no other world than our own does not preclude us from considering and deciding whether the arrangements of the world argue design on the part of its Creator; whether history reveals a moral purpose, a process of disciplining, educating, elevating mankind; whether it is likely that there is "one Divine event"—however far off it may be yet—toward which "the whole Creation moves." To discover this we must observe how all things work together, how the several parts conspire to compass the end, how every part of the Creation makes some contribution towards the fulfilment of the design. And when we consider the special contribution made towards this great purpose by the Christian religion, we note how its position is in like manner due to the harmony and combination of many separate and independent lines of evidence, so that, although there is nothing else which can be put into direct comparison with it, we cannot reasonably ascribe it to chance. The influ-

ences which have combined to make that religion what it is, were for the most part independent in their origin, and were only in the course of historical development united and made to bear upon the one great end. Even, for example, if we could believe that the life of the Founder of Christianity, in all its originality and wisdom, was the offspring of human powers of invention, the development of this ideal at the precise time when, as history shows, circumstances were most favourable to the propagation of the religion of which it was so powerful and even indispensable a factor, is a coincidence so remarkable that its being a mere coincidence is more improbable than any claims which have ever been urged on behalf of Christianity. A contemplation of the external world, of human nature, and of the course of history, gives rise to a problem to which we may fearlessly assert that Christ alone is the key. And the more complicated the conditions of the problem, and the more fully and exactly these are satisfied by Christianity, the more assured is our faith, and the more indisputable the certainty that here alone the true solution of the problem is to be found.

4. In selecting a few illustrations of the concurrence of various lines of proof in the case of Christianity, we shall dwell by preference on those which have not hitherto in these pages been brought prominently into view.

(1) Was it an accident that such a personality as that of Christ should appear in the only Monotheistic nation of the ancient world? Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity are the only religions acknowledging one God, the supreme ruler of heaven and earth; and of these the second and third are both the offspring of the first. "And if we are asked," says Max Müller, "how it was that Abraham possessed not only the primitive intuition of God as He had revealed Himself to all mankind, but passed through the denial of all other gods to the knowledge of the

one God, we are content to answer that it was by a special Divine Revelation . . . granted to one man, and handed down from him to Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, to all who believe in the God of Abraham."¹ Greece might produce a Socrates and India a Buddha, but it was only on the soil of Judæa that Christ appeared. Is it too much to say, or is it not rather the most natural explanation of the phenomena, that Israel was a preparation for Christ? Then "at the central point of the world's history—central not only in time, but in historical import, the man Jesus arose, and claimed to be, in a sense altogether apart from other men, the Teacher and the Saviour of the world." The claim stands absolutely alone in the world's history. Neither Buddha nor Confucius took up this ground. And what is more strange, the claim, whatever view men have taken of Christ, has been generally conceded. He has been, and is, the Light of the World.

(2) Then we have the fact that marvellous as was the appearance of Jesus, not only was there a historical preparation made for it, but it was distinctly *expected*. It is not necessary to enter here upon the subject of prophecy. It is sufficient to refer to the fact that negative critics like Strauss and Renan fully admit the existence of such an expectation. Upon its reality and vividness they build their theory of the life of Christ, which they regard as a largely fictitious narrative based upon the assumption that the prophecies must needs be fulfilled. It may be admitted that, had the expectation referred to merely given rise to *claims*, to the appearance of false Messiahs, whose pretensions were drowned in blood or obliterated by time, there would be nothing for which natural causes would not account. But claims which were not only put forward in accordance with expectation, but have been vindicated in the face of all

¹ *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. pp. 373, 374.

mankind and have justified the expectation, cannot be passed over thus. The question presses for settlement—Coincidence, or Design?

(3) Is it accident, we ask again, that the Religion founded by this Jewish Messiah is coextensive with the civilisation of the world? “Beyond the pale of Christendom, the great races of humanity which in past ages have shown equal capacities for the highest culture, have at this present time no single representative nation, Turanian, Semitic, or Aryan, in which liberty, philosophy, nay, even physical science, with its serene indifference to moral or spiritual truth, have a settled home or practical development. . . . Those nations have been pre-eminent in every age which profess at least to acknowledge Christ as their Lord, while we have observed the rapid disintegration or ruin of communities which have corrupted or abjured His religion.”¹ “Look where we will, a great fact as wide as the world arrests our attention. Wherever there is Christianity, we see superiority and growth; wherever Christianity is not, we see inferiority and stagnation. So far-reaching is the correspondence that it cannot be accidental. Either Christianity raises those who receive it, or it commends itself to all rising nations. And each of these suppositions implies unique excellence. . . . A survey of the present state and past history of our race leaves no room for doubt that Christianity is the source of the pre-eminence of the foremost nations. . . . In view of all this, it is not too much to say that Christianity has saved the world. When Christ was born the world was helplessly and hopelessly sinking. For many long centuries it has been rising. And for this great change no cause can be found except the influence of Christ and His followers.”²

¹ Canon Cook, in *Modern Scepticism*.

² Beet, *Credentials of the Gospel*, pp. 84, 88.

(4) The literary problem presented by the Bible itself is one of the most conspicuous examples of the principle with which we are now dealing. Here we have a large number of documents, produced throughout a long course of centuries by many different authors. Yet it is substantially the same theme which inspires, the same spirit which pervades, the whole. "These sacred books form a progressive organic religious unity, such as is found in the literature of no other nation. . . . However different the authors, and however distant from each other in time or place, their contributions, instead of coming into collision, harmonise, and fall into their proper place in the organic growth and whole, until the culmination is reached in the New Testament."¹ This extraordinary development can be paralleled nowhere else. Is it accident or art, or is it inspiration and providential guidance—inspiration certainly not in any mechanical sense, but in the sense of the presence and influence of a spirit, flowing from one source and making for one, and that the highest, end?

(5) With the testimony of Scripture, again, coincides the significance of the witness rendered by the existence of the Church, and also of the Sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper. The difficulty of securing the acceptance and adoption by contemporaries, or almost contemporaries, of anything of the nature of a monument or memorial, unless that occurred of which it is a memorial, is sufficiently evident, and has been repeatedly pointed out. "Narratives may be forged, but monuments and memorials cannot be forged, and memorial ordinances least of all. . . . The observance of the fourth of July by the Americans, as the anniversary of their independence, must continue for ever an unassailable proof of the event. The celebration of the Passover is, inde-

¹ Mair, *Studies*, pp. 291, 292.

pendently of the narrative in Exodus, an excellent proof of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. . . . People will not allow such an observance to be palmed off upon them; they will not readily lend themselves to a gross public deception; and hence it follows that a memorial ordinance, reaching back to the age of the event commemorated, is evidence of the very highest kind.”¹ The application of this principle to the Christian Church, which was born on the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, and baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost, and to such institutions as the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Day which date from the earliest times, is clear. We have only to consider how much is involved in the admission of the primitive character of these practices, to see that they bring us into the very presence of the Master, and are a warrant to us of much that has been taught concerning Him and in His name.

5. The above examples will be sufficient to illustrate the nature and strength of the cumulative argument in favour of Christianity. It might be shown in the same way that all the various threads of the External or Historical Evidences, as they are called, may be combined into one strong cable of proof, and that this again unites with the various branches of the Internal Evidence to render the chance of error or mistake infinitesimally small. And when the testimony of personal experience is added to all this, or—as perhaps it should be stated—when all this comes by way of confirmation of personal experience of the power and of the fruits of Religion,² the force of the argument becomes little less than demonstrative. At the same time the result of the whole inquiry will above all depend upon the effect produced on mind

¹ Mair, *Studies*, pp. 307, 308.

² See Note XXVIII. *Personal Assurance of Religious Truth.*

and heart by the *Personality of Jesus Christ*. How that Personality shines out from the "record of three short years of active life," how it has transformed history, we have already seen. If it makes no impression upon the mind brought into contact with it, it is greatly to be feared that the most elaborate and closely reasoned argument will have been constructed in vain. But if Christ's character and life have attracted and touched the heart of the inquirer, the other considerations involved will strengthen the impression thus made; the evidences of Christianity will not indeed be regarded as useless or superfluous, but will be employed as subsidiary and supplementary, confirming faith and placing it upon a reasonable basis. And what, we may ask in conclusion, *is* the impression which must be made upon any sound moral nature by the unique excellence of the spirit and life of Christ? Can any heart not utterly hardened and dead fail to acknowledge the beauty of holiness, the exhaustless depths of love which he manifested? "Jesus of Nazareth," it has been eloquently said, "puts forth, as the solution of the problem that was wearying the world to death, simply Himself. In contemplation of His peerless goodness, in passionate gratitude for His wondrous love, in constant communion with His soul made perfect for us through sufferings, He proclaimed that the one possible remedy for the world's death-sickness lay. From Him alone could flow the fountains of living water; and those alone united to Him could bear the fruits that should be for the healing of the nations. Did ever any one of the sons of men dare to take upon him a burden like this; to proclaim in the hearing of angels and men that he and the hope of the world were one? The purity, the perfectness, the self-control of the moral teaching of Christ forbid us to harbour for a moment the notion of fanatic enthusiasm. And if this claim of

transcending magnificence was indeed but conscious and base deception, then must the eyes of men have lost all power of discerning the Divine ; and all that eighteen centuries have seen of fairest, noblest, and strongest must have had their source and foundation in a lie. Do lies make men so pure and good ; do they keep their strength so long ? Nay rather, there is nothing strong for the ages but the truth of God ; and earth has nothing to-day so mighty as the love of the Church for her Risen Lord.”¹

¹ Wilkins, *Light of the World*, pp. 147, 148.

NOTES

NOTE I. (page 3). "APOLOGY" AND "APOLOGETICS."

Apologetics is the science which determines the principles on which Christianity is to be defended or vindicated, which studies the essential nature and relations of Christianity on the one side, and of the principles opposed to it on the other. *Apology* is the defence itself as addressed to a particular set of difficulties or objections; *Apologetics* is the science of the principles on which Apologies are to be constructed and elaborated. It naturally exhibits a greater number of changes in point of form than any other branch of Theological Science, because it has had to accommodate itself to the changing circumstances of the times and the varying charges of objectors. Theoretically, of course, it need not require such constant adaptation. An examination into the basis of Christian belief, which would justify it to the reflective consciousness as firm and convincing, might conceivably place it beyond the reach of attack. The grounds of the Christian faith might be so set forth that the difficulties of Scepticism would be met and obviated before they were actually raised. And the result of an inquiry so conducted might be less liable to change than those partial investigations which are made with the view of meeting particular objections. Ebrard, an able expounder of the science, adopts

this conception of its function. "Christian Apologetics," he says, "is distinguished from the mere Apology by this, that it is not determined in course and method by the attacks appearing casually at any point of time, but from the nature of Christianity itself deduces the method of defence of the same, and consequently the defence itself. Every apologetic is an apology, but every apology is not an apologetic. Apologetics is that science which deduces from the nature of Christianity itself what classes of attack are generally possible, what different sides of Christian truth may possibly be assailed, and what false principles lie at the bottom of these attacks" (*Apologetics*, Eng. transl., vol. i. p. 3). Vinet has eloquently expressed the same thought when he says regarding the ideal Apologetic that it is more than the casual product of momentary needs: "It would not wait for the assault, it would be itself aggressive; it would not concern itself with the need of one age, but with the need of all time; it would not assail one form of unbelief, but, having exhumed from the depths of the human soul the principle of all forms of unbelief, it would include them all, anticipating those which have not yet appeared, and ready with an answer to objections which have not yet been formulated. For that end it would penetrate further into the region of doubt than the boldest doubters themselves, would undermine the very abyss which they have excavated, would become unbelieving in its turn with an unbelief still more determined and more profound; in short, would probe the wound to its fullest extent in the hope of reaching and removing the very root of the evil. This kind of Apology is so different from all others that it requires another name. Religion no longer appears as a pleader, but as a judge; the suppliant's humility gives place to the arbiter's authority; Apology is no longer merely justification,—it is laudation, homage, worship, and the edifice which it rears

is no longer a citadel, but a temple" (Quoted in Grébillat, *Exposé de Theol. Syst.*, vol. ii. p. 11). The truth in the views thus expressed seems to be that Apologetics should not content itself with warding off the casual attack; it should do this on a system, on settled principles chosen beforehand; it should endeavour as much as possible to anticipate the attacks and the quarters from which they may come; otherwise it may be found that there is inconsistency in the methods of defence, and the concentration of force upon the point attacked may leave the faith upon some other side altogether undefended. In practice it is found that the result aimed at by the distinguished writers referred to can only be partially attained. It is difficult if not impossible for the advocate of religion to anticipate objections which have not been actually raised; it is still more difficult to forestall the ingenuity of the adversary and the endless combinations and fresh surprises which it enables him to make. "Nothing," says Mr. Balfour (*Foundations of Belief*, p. 218), "so quickly waxes old as apologetics, unless, perhaps, it be criticism." Apologetics must therefore continue to be rather a systematic exhibition of the methods which have been found effective in the past than an attempt to anticipate those which may be required in time to come.

NOTE II. (page 3). HISTORY OF APOLOGETICS.

The History of Apologetics is of course the reverse side of the History of Unbelief, though there may be chapters in the latter which are not reflected in the former. The History may be divided into *five* periods, or, if we include that of the New Testament, into *six*. The latter division has been advocated on the twofold ground that much in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles is of a really apologetic character, shows our Lord and his Apostles on the defensive in face of the misapprehensions and

persistent misrepresentations of their day; and that, this being so, we may find in these writings models of what such defensive statements should be. The other five divisions are (1) The Patristic Period; (2) The Middle Ages; (3) From the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century; (4) The Eighteenth Century; and (5) The Modern Period. The first included the times of persecution, the struggle of Christianity with Judaism and with Heathenism, and its survival on the fall of the Western Empire. The second period, as became the Ages of Faith, was not fruitful in Apologetic Literature. The third was the age of Grotius (*De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*) and Pascal (*Thoughts on Religion*). The fourth, in which Deism flourished, is, after the Patristic period, the most important in the History of Apologetics; its most famous contribution to the subject was the *Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature* of Bishop Butler. The fifth has been marked by the distinct reaction against the unbelief of the preceding century and the rise of a new spirit in England, France, and Germany. That the battle is not over is evident from such phenomena as the theories of Strauss and his followers, or as the Positivism and Agnosticism of to-day. But there is also among us much living religion, and there have appeared in France and Germany as well as in Britain and America many doughty champions of the faith.

NOTE III. (page 10). THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE.

“The power of authority is never more subtle and effective than when it produces a psychological ‘atmosphere’ or ‘climate’ favourable to the life of certain modes of belief, unfavourable, and even fatal, to the life of others” (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 206).

NOTE IV. (page 10). BIAS OR PREPOSSESSION.

This is what Bacon meant by the *Idola* of the Cavern, cf. *Novum Organum*, Bk. I. aph. 53-58. "Mankind," he says, "are attached to particular sciences and trains of thought, either because they believe themselves to have originated and discovered them, or because they have bestowed their greatest labour upon them, and have become most familiar with them. . . . As a general rule, every one who contemplates the nature of things should distrust whatever most readily takes and holds captive his own intellect, and should use so much the more caution in coming to determinations of this kind, that his understanding may remain impartial and clear."

Mr. Romanes, in *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 100, 101, makes a remarkable and instructive confession with regard to his advance from his earlier to his later views on the subject of religion. "As far," he says, "as introspection can carry one, it does not appear to me that the modifications which my views have undergone since the publication of my previous *Candid Examination*¹ are due so much to logical processes of the intellect, as to the sub-conscious (and therefore more or less unanalysable) influences due to the ripening experiences of life. The extent to which this is true is seldom, if ever, realised, although it is practically exemplified every day by the sobering caution which advancing age exercises upon the mind. Not so much by any above-board play of syllogism as by some underhand cheating of consciousness, do the accumulating experiences of life and of thought slowly enrich the judgment. And this, one need hardly say, is especially true in such regions of thought as present the most tenuous media for

¹ *A Candid Examination of Theism*, by "Physicus," in Trübner's *English and Foreign Philosophical Library*, 1878.

the progress of thought by the comparatively clumsy means of syllogistic locomotion. For the farther we ascend from the solid ground of verification, the less confidence should we place in our wings of speculation, while the more do we find the practical wisdom of such intellectual caution, or distrust of ratiocination, as can be given only by experience. Therefore, most of all is this the case in those departments of thought which are farthest from the region of our sensuous life—viz. metaphysics and religion. And, as a matter of fact, it is just in these departments of thought that we find the rashness of youth most amenable to the discipline in question by the experience of age.”

NOTE V. (page 14). UNIVERSALITY OF RELIGION.

The universal prevalence of Religion early attracted the attention of thinking men. “You may see states,” says Plutarch, “without walls, without laws, without coins, without writing; but a people without a god, without prayers, without religious exercises and sacrifices, has no man seen” (Adv. Colot. Epic. c. 31, quoted in Luthardt, *Fundamental Truths*, p. 147). “This,” says Cicero, “may further be brought as an irrefragable argument that there are gods, that there never was any nation so barbarous, nor any people in the world so savage, as to be without some notion of gods; many have wrong notions of the gods, for that is the nature or ordinary consequence of bad customs, yet all allow that there is a certain divine nature or energy. Nor does this proceed from the conversation of men, or the agreement of philosophers; it is not an opinion established by institutions or by laws; but no doubt in every case the consent of all nations is to be looked on as a law of nature” (*Quæst. Tusc.* I. 13).

Mr. Romanes, in an essay printed in *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 81-83, finds an argument for the existence of God upon the "religious instincts" of mankind. He points out that "on the one hand these instincts are not of such obvious use to the species as are those of morality; and, on the other hand, while they are unquestionably very general, very persistent, and very powerful, they do not appear to serve any 'end' or 'purpose' in the scheme of things, unless we accept the theory which is given of them by those in whom they are most strongly developed." He thinks the argument of legitimate force, because "if the religious instincts of the human race point to no reality as their object, they are out of analogy with all other instinctive endowments." He does not consider it invalidated "by such facts as that widely different intellectual conceptions touching the character of this object are entertained by different races of mankind," but thinks that it so far justifies the inference "that, if the general order of Nature is due to mind, the character of that mind is such as it is conceived to be by the most highly developed form of religion."

NOTE VI. (page 14). RELIGION AND NATIONALITY.

It is when we turn to social life, to the history of peoples, that the influence of Religion becomes indisputably manifest. The life and progress of nations are greatly dependent upon the vitality of Religion, upon them Religious Scepticism comes like a blight. And in proportion as the religion is high and pure, its power for good will be the greater; the forces within it will work for the improvement and elevation of those to whom it comes. No less a voice than that of Goethe speaks unequivocally

in this sense—"All epochs in which faith, under whatever form, has prevailed, have been brilliant, heart-elevating, and fruitful, both to contemporaries and to posterity. All epochs, on the contrary, in which unbelief, under whatever form, has maintained a sad supremacy, even if they should glitter for the moment with a false splendour, vanish from the memory of posterity, because none care to trouble themselves with the knowledge of that which has been barren." Max Müller records the startling impression made upon him when, many years before, he heard the philosopher Schelling ask and answer the questions, What makes an Ethnos? What is the true origin of a people? How did human beings become a people? "Community of blood produces families, clans, possibly races, but it does not produce that higher and purely moral feeling which binds men together and makes them a people." This is the work of Language and Religion, but Religion is even a more powerful agent than Language. The answer, Max Müller says, has been confirmed more and more by subsequent researches into the history of both. He refers also to Sir Henry Maine as forcibly pointing out that in ancient times Religion as a divine influence was underlying and supporting every relation of life, and every social institution (*Introduction to the Science of Religion*, pp. 145, 152).

NOTE VII. (page 15). SUBSTITUTES FOR RELIGION.

French writers seem particularly partial to taking up the position that Religion in general, and Christianity in particular, is only a temporary stage on the march to something beyond, that they must one day resign their place as guides of humanity in favour of Philosophy or Science. Jouffroy argued strenuously in favour of the

former, and Guyau, an able writer, whose premature death has been much lamented, in a notable book, entitled *The Irreligion of the Future*, endeavoured to point out what motives can be brought to bear upon man to secure the fulfilment especially of his social duties, when Christianity shall have been finally dethroned, and Science reigns in its stead. We allude here only to *earnest* writers, to those who show that the great problems with which Religion deals have touched their minds and hearts. The frivolous, sneering, or immoral sceptic scarcely needs and does not deserve serious treatment. We are thankful to recognise, however, that in many, perhaps a majority of instances, what is known as Modern Thought, with all its opposition to traditional forms of thought and belief, is grave and serious, almost worthy to be called religious. Its aims are high, its spirit is pure. It has a genuine enthusiasm of humanity. All this may be freely admitted, even where it must be held as questionable, whether it could have existed, or would long continue operative, apart from that which it so energetically repudiates.

The difficulty is not to get rid of religious teaching, or even of religious influence; it is to get rid of the native bent to rest on something outside ourselves, and above all to get another power which will do as effectually what Religion now does. What example can be more instructive than that of John Stuart Mill, one of the clearest and most candid thinkers of our time? "I was brought up," he says in his *Autobiography* (p. 38), "from the first without any religious belief in the ordinary acceptation of the term." Yet we find him elsewhere admitting the beneficial effect of a belief in God and immortality in that "it makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings." He renders also a sublime homage to the character and teachings of Christ. And in his later years, after the death of his wife, he tells how in order to "feel

her still near me, I bought a cottage as close as possible to the place where she is buried." . . . "Her memory"—and there is a deep pathos in the confession—"is to me a religion, and her approbation the standard by which, summing up as it does all worthiness, I endeavour to regulate my life" (*Autobiography*, p. 251).

NOTE VIII. (page 15). RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

The result of the training which Israel received has been well described as "a faith in God singularly comprehensive, sublime, and practical,—a faith which rested, not on speculation and reasoning, but on a conviction of God having directly revealed Himself to the spirits of men, and which, while ignoring metaphysical theorising, ascribed to God all metaphysical as well as moral perfections; a faith which, in spite of its simplicity, so apprehended the relationship of God to nature as neither to confound them like Pantheism, nor to separate them like Deism, but to assert both the immanence and the transcendence of the divine; a faith in a living and personal God, the Almighty and sole Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world; a faith especially in a God holy in all His ways and righteous in all His works, who was directing and guiding human affairs to a destination worthy of His own character, and therefore an essentially ethical, elevating and hopeful faith" (Flint, Art. "Theism," in *Encycl. Brit.*, 9th Edition, p. 239).

NOTE IX. (page 17).

ARGUMENT FROM THE NECESSITY OF THOUGHT.

It may be desirable to indicate a little more fully the nature of this which is called the Ontological Argument.

It involves principles which lie at the basis of all thought whatever, but which comparatively few appreciate, because few attempt to analyse the ultimate grounds of their experience. When we reflect we find that there are laws of reason without which knowledge and intelligence could not be, which are given as absolute principles, which we cannot conceive as liable to alteration. But these laws of reason we also find to be laws of existence. We do not measure or reckon only according to mathematical laws, but we find that the universe, whether in the motion of a plant or a particle, whether in the combinations of chemical substances or in the flashing of a beam of light, conforms strictly to those laws. What is that in which both have their ground, which is the principle of their correspondence, the fundamental term at once of thought and of being? It is the Absolute, the Idea of ideas, the Existence of existences. Reflection further shows us that the Absolute must not only be independent of anything outside of itself,—which is involved in the very meaning of the term,—but complete within itself, *being* in its fulness and totality. It must be one and indivisible, unique, infinite, yet not that mere abstraction for which the formula of Pantheists from Spinoza to Strauss has been — “All determination in negation.” On the contrary, the Absolute must be conceived as infinite on its positive side, including in itself all perfection; not a monotony of existence, but the ground on which all positive qualities may be displayed. Whether these qualities *are* displayed is, however, neither affirmed nor denied by the Ontological Argument, which simply establishes not the identity, but the common origin and ground, of thought and existence. Whether it be that the mind and the world have the same author, and have thus been adapted to each other, or that there is some more mysterious relation between them, we can scarcely avoid recognising that the power which has imposed conditions

on knowledge must be the same as that which has imposed corresponding conditions on the world, that as all our thoughts run up into one all-inclusive thought, so all existences are in their nature referable to one primal and all-inclusive existence, and that there must be that in which thought and existence ultimately meet.

NOTE X. (page 26). NATURALISM.

“Who would pay the slightest attention to naturalism if it did not force itself into the retinue of science, assume her livery, and claim, as a kind of poor relation, in some sort to represent her authority and to speak with her voice? Of itself it is nothing. It neither ministers to the needs of mankind, nor does it satisfy their reason. And if, in spite of this, its influence has increased, is increasing, and as yet shows no sign of diminution, if more and more the educated and the half-educated are acquiescing in its pretensions, and, however reluctantly, submitting to its domination, this is, at least in part, because they have not learned to distinguish between the practical and inevitable claims which experience has on their allegiance, and the speculative but quite illusory title by which the empirical school have endeavoured to associate naturalism and science in a kind of joint supremacy over the thoughts and consciences of mankind” (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 135, 136).

“The differences between naturalism and theology are, no doubt, irreconcilable, since naturalism is by definition the negation of all theology. But science must not be dragged into every one of the many quarrels which naturalism has taken upon its shoulders. Science is in no way concerned, for instance, to deny the reality of a world unrevealed to us in sense-perception, nor the existence of

a God who, however imperfectly, may be known by those who diligently seek Him. All it says, or ought to say, is that these are matters beyond its jurisdiction ; to be tried, therefore, in other courts, and before judges administering different laws" (*Ibid.* p. 293).

NOTE XI. (page 26). THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF
A MAN OF SCIENCE.

Professor Ernst Haeckel's *Monism*, of which a translation has been recently published (London : A. & C. Black), is interesting as an indication of the conceptions, speculative and religious, which, on the authority of one of the foremost representatives of modern evolutionary science, are alone compatible with its deliverances. The work consists of an address, originally delivered extemporaneously at Altenburg on the 9th of October 1892, and afterwards revised and enlarged. Its full title is *Monism, as connecting Religion and Science : The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science*. It contains the outcome of thirty years of thought upon the problems of the philosophy of nature.

We must first give a brief outline of the argument pursued. By Monism "we unambiguously express our conviction that there lives 'one spirit in all things,' and that the whole cognisable world is constituted, and has been developed, in accordance with one common fundamental law." This involves the "essential unity of inorganic and organic nature," and abolishes the distinction between "the natural and the spiritual,"—"the latter is only a part of the former (or *vice versâ*) ; both are one." Monism is not, indeed, natural to man, whose earliest tendency is to ascribe phenomena to personal beings, a tendency which survives in the teleological view of the

world, as the work of a creator working according to plan. Upon this basis arise the various dualistic or polytheistic systems which gradually give place to Monism. God is no longer placed "over against the material world as an external being, but must be placed as 'a divine power' or 'moving spirit' within the cosmos itself. . . . Even the human soul is but an insignificant part of the all-embracing 'world-soul'; just as the human body is only a small individual fraction of the great organised physical world." The unification of nature has been furthered by the conceptions of "conservation of energy" and "conservation of matter," which Haeckel proposes to combine as the law of the conservation of substance. All phenomena without exception are to be carried back to the mechanism of the *atom*, the relation of which, however, to the "general space-filling universal ether" is as yet an unsolved problem. Probably the ether-atoms repel each other while the ponderable mass-atoms attract each other, and thus the starting-point for the evolution of the universe is gained:—"Religion itself, in its reasonable forms, can take over the ether theory as an article of faith, bringing into contradistinction the mobile cosmic ether as creating divinity, and the inert heavy mass as material of creation." The atoms of our chemical elements arise from "the grouping together in definite numbers of the primitive atoms or atoms of mass"; the earth is thrown off from the whirling nebular mass; it cools, water appears, organic life becomes possible. Through successive stages life advances up to man, whose consciousness is a "neurological problem," a special case of the "question of substance. If we understood the nature of matter and energy, we should also understand how the substance underlying them can under certain conditions feel, desire, and think." Monism does not deny Immortality, which in a scientific sense is "conservation of substance"—"the cosmos as a whole is immortal,"

personal immortality only is unthinkable. All miracles and revelations being set aside, we have "as the precious and priceless kernel of true religion, the purified ethic that rests on rational anthropology." The monistic idea of God recognises the divine spirit in all things; and it is not without its Trinity: "The True, the Beautiful, and the Good,—these are the three august Divine Ones before which we bow the knee in adoration: in the unforced combination and mutual supplementing of these we gain the pure idea of God. To this 'triune' Divine Ideal shall the coming twentieth century build its altars."

The scheme thus outlined deserves a closer consideration than can at present be given to it. A few remarks in criticism are all that can be attempted.

1. It gives us pleasure to acknowledge the earnest spirit which pervades this, as well as many other recent utterances from the same side. It seems to us emphatically that of one feeling his way to the highest truth, feeling, we may say reverently, after God. Even when we believe there is misrepresentation, we are convinced that it is due to misunderstanding, not to a love of carping objection.

2. It is at the same time gratifying to feel how much there is in common between the Scientific and the Theistic or Christian view of the world. The unity of natural law, so far as Science is able to establish it, is as essential to Monotheism as to Pantheism or Monism, and we have only to read carefully this address of Haeckel's to see that the gaps which science leaves have to be filled up by speculation and faith as much on the one view as on the other. It may be that so far as our reading of external nature is concerned, either theory may be as possible as the other; but we claim that a full and impartial consideration of human nature, experience, and history reveals the difference between them and makes the Pantheistic view inadequate and untenable.

3. The theory of Monism as an intelligible explanation of the universe breaks down upon the simple fact that the universe, as it presents itself to our experience, is not a monotony, but is infinitely diversified. Many a theory which appears logically irrefragable is confuted by a *solvitur ambulando*; it proves too much; it proves that what we know as existing never could be at all! Now in the universe diversity must be accounted for as well as unity; we may reduce them both to their simplest terms, but we must beware of crossing the gulf between them by means of a phrase or a metaphor. In Haeckel's *monistic* system we have a curious series of contrasts or correlatives. We have "conservation of energy" balanced by "conservation of matter"; to combine them under the conception of "conservation of substance" is an assumption which *explains* nothing, which does not leave their opposition less complete or their necessity less absolute. The conception of "animated atoms," to which Haeckel makes a passing reference accompanied by a somewhat hesitating approval, does not appear to help us much. Even as worked out by the late Professor Clifford under the name of "mind-stuff," it is attended by two insuperable difficulties,—first, the inconceivability of the alleged fact itself; and secondly, the unresolved question of the power or influence under the guidance of which the "animated atoms" range themselves into the forms of the actual universe. Is that power autocratic or republican; do the atoms act under necessity or, as it were, after conference? Spinoza's conception of Substance, as on the one side Extension, on the other Thought, is not made more acceptable by this indefinite dividing up of substance. Mind as one and a whole can be thought of as effecting that which an infinity of "atomic" minds could not effect without a co-ordinating power, a mind in

the whole as well as in the several parts. Again, we have the confessedly insoluble relationship of the ether-atoms and the mass-atoms. A suggestion is made as to the mode in which the one may have sprung from the other, but their fundamental properties are represented as entirely opposite,—an unlikeness which is the indispensable condition of further development. The ether is, as we have seen, compared to the “creating divinity,” while the mass is the “material of creation.” All this would point rather to a system of Dualism or Polarity than Monism, and it is curious that a considerable portion of Professor Haeckel’s address is occupied with an advocacy of Dualism rather than Monotheism as a system of Religion, in so far as the choice lies between the two, and with a reproach to Christian theologians for letting the doctrine of the “devil,” in the sense of an Ahriman opposed to Ormuzd, fall into the background! We may ask whether in view of the opposition which seems to run through the physical universe, even on Professor Haeckel’s own showing,—an opposition which it requires the most speculative and questionable assumption to overcome,—Dualism is not really the most probable theory of the world, or if not Dualism, whether Monotheism has not at least as much to say for itself as Monism. In our earliest lessons in Greek philosophy we are taught how Thales and Anaximander attempted vainly to construct Monistic systems, and how it was like a ray of light when Anaxagoras pointed to Mind as the necessary hypothesis to account for the ordering and arrangement of the physical elements. The same process has been repeated many times since in the case both of individual thinkers and schools of thought. In his Rede lecture of 1885 the late G. J. Romanes adopted a view of “Monism” similar to that of Bruno and Haeckel, “according to which mind and

motion are co-ordinate and probably coextensive aspects of the same universal fact." A year or two later, in the essays printed in *Thoughts on Religion* (Longmans, 1895), he is found writing: "We are thus driven upon the theory of Theism as furnishing the only nameable explanation of this universal order. That is to say, by no logical artifice can we escape from the conclusion that, as far as we can see, this universal order must be regarded as due to one integrating principle; and that this, so far as we can see, is most probably of the nature of mind" (pp. 71, 72). The *Thoughts on Religion*, which are the *disjecta membra* of a profound "Candid Examination of Religion," show how when once this priority of mind over matter has been admitted, in other words, when the equally balanced Dualism has ended in a decided preponderance being allowed to Ormuzd over Ahriman, the mind is compelled to go further, and Monism while having much in common with the truth has a side on which it is unsatisfactory. Romanes in the *Thoughts* busies himself with problems which could have had no meaning or interest for him until he had answered in the affirmative the question as to the truth of Theism.

4. There are one or two minor features of Haeckel's *Monism* to which reference may be made, if only for the purpose of illustrating the state of mind which renders contentment with such a theory possible. We have spoken of his misunderstandings of his opponents' position. The most serious of these is his definition of the God of Theism as "a 'personal being,' or, in other words, an individual of limited extension in space, or even of human form." In opposition to this view, "to Monism," he says, "God is everywhere." Surely the omnipresence of God is an article of the Christian creed! It may be that by the ignorant and uncultured

God is sometimes conceived of as a "magnified and non-natural man," but even then analysis will show that elements enter into and cling round the thought which help to redeem it from unworthiness, and certainly make inapplicable the reproach that the "loftiest cosmic idea is degraded to that of a 'gaseous vertebrate.'" But the thoughtful Christian theologian recognises and contends for the immanence as well as the transcendence of Deity; he recognises that while he claims to know God in a sense in which the Agnostic denies that knowledge, there are aspects of the Divine Being with regard to which he too must be agnostic, and so far as he conceives the Godhead on the analogy of humanity, it is the moral and spiritual side of humanity to which he believes that the Godhead is akin. We may regard even Romanes' definition of Theism, when he says that "the nearest approach which the human mind can make to a true notion of the *ens realissimum* is that of an inconceivably magnified image of itself at its best," as in certain respects inadequate, but it is far more just than that of Haeckel.

The Monistic ethic, according to Haeckel, is identical with the purest ethic of Christianity; it consists in love, and "its natural and highest command" is "Do to others as you would they should do to you." This law, he claims, is far older than Christianity. "In the human family this maxim has always been accepted as self-evident; an ethical instinct, it was an inheritance from our animal ancestors. It had already found a place among the herds of Apes and other social Mammals; in a similar manner, but with a wider scope, it was already present in the most primitive communities and among the hordes of the least advanced savages." We do not pause to criticise this as a history of the origin of our moral sentiments, scarcely even to point out the immense interval between the self-sacrifice enjoined by Christianity

and the corporate selfishness though individual devotion which alone the gregarious instinct illustrates. We do not stay to argue that this, like many similar theories, in seeking to explain the higher forms of life by reference to the lower, insinuates that there is nothing in the one but what is implicitly contained in the other. But we may fairly contrast the line of argument assumed when the Monistic ethic has to be vindicated with that employed when the goodness of God has to be attacked (p. 73). There we see nothing but the "struggle for existence." "We now know that the whole of organic nature on our planet exists only by a relentless war of all against all. The raging war of interests in human society is only a feeble picture of the unceasing and terrible war of existence which reigns throughout the whole of the living world." Which, we may ask, is the true school of morality, the conflict of all against all, or the gregarious instinct? And is not a more adequate theory than that of Monism necessary to show us which is the higher of the two,—is not some higher Power than it makes us acquainted with necessary to bring the comparative order of the one out of the chaos of the other?

We have noted how Haeckel deals with the question of Immortality and how he "palters with a double sense," appearing to vindicate the doctrine while repudiating it in the only meaning in which it can have any value for the human mind.

In concluding this Note, we simply transcribe the conditions which, according to Haeckel, constitute an "unprejudiced point of view" from which the questions of the relation of Religion to Science should be discussed. Their impartiality is obvious! A man of science will hold the Monistic faith when he has "(1) Sufficient acquaintance with the various departments of natural science, and in particular with the modern doctrine of evolution; (2)

Sufficient acuteness and clearness of judgment to draw by induction and deduction, the necessary logical consequences that flow from such empirical knowledge; (3) Sufficient moral courage to maintain the Monistic knowledge, so gained, against the attacks of hostile dualistic and pluralistic systems; and (4) Sufficient strength of mind to free himself, by sound, independent reasoning, from dominant religious prejudices, and especially from those irrational dogmas which have been firmly lodged in our minds from earliest youth as indisputable revelations" (p. 60).

NOTE XII. (page 33). LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE.

"Nothing, for instance, seems simpler than the idea involved in the statement that we are, each of us, situated at any given moment in some particular portion of space, surrounded by a multitude of material things, which are constantly acting upon us and upon each other. . . . Yet the purport of the sentence which expresses it is clear only till it is examined, is certain only till it is questioned; while almost every word in it suggests, and has long suggested, perplexing problems to all who are prepared to consider them. What are 'we'? What is space? Can 'we' be in space, or is it only our bodies about which any such statement can be made? What is a 'thing'? and, in particular, what is a 'material thing'? What is meant by saying that one 'material thing' acts upon 'another'? What is meant by saying that 'material things' act upon 'us'? Here are six questions all directly and obviously arising out of our most familiar acts of judgment. Yet, direct and obvious as they are, it is hardly too much to say that they involve all the leading problems of modern philosophy, and that the man who has got an answer to them is the fortunate possessor of a tolerably complete system of metaphysic" (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 281, 282).

NOTE XIII. (page 41). DEISM.

The Deistic position is essentially the same as that taken up by the ancient Epicureans when they spoke of the *Dei otiosi*, and declared "*Deos nihil humana curare.*"

"I agree with Pascal¹ that there is virtually nothing to be gained by being a theist, as distinguished from a Christian. Unitarianism is only an affair of the reason—a merely abstract theory of the mind, having nothing to do with the heart, or the real needs of mankind. It is only when it takes the New Testament, tears out a few of its leaves relating to the divinity of Christ, and appropriates all the rest, that its system becomes in any degree possible as a basis for personal religion."

"If there is a Deity it seems to be in some indefinite degree more probable that He should impart a Revelation than that He should not" (Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 165).

NOTE XIV. (page 43). REVELATION AS EDUCATION.

Revelation has been said (as by Lessing) to be "The Education of the Human Race." This is incorrect only if by Education is meant Self-Education. If the Divine Education of the human race were meant,—God leading man onwards to know and appropriate more of himself, to understand more fully the natural manifestation of Himself in the world, to read more clearly the meaning of His dealings with the race,—we could scarcely have a truer definition. Our experience indeed must supply us with the elements which the Divine Education builds up into higher forms. But when we consider the actual

¹ *Pensées*, pp. 91-93.

structure of human knowledge we are induced to conclude that the elements of experience available are not altogether inadequate to the transmission of even the highest truth. Poetry, with its intense spirituality and beauty,—Morality, with its refined views of duty and virtue,—have been imparted and handed down from mind to mind by no other means than we may assume to be at the service of Revelation. It is true that for Revelation to be possible under such conditions assumes that the truth to be revealed is not altogether out of harmony with, or out of relation to, the nature and experience of man. Take any one of the Divine attributes—Love, for example. By a process of abstraction and elimination, man may be led to form such a conception of Love as may not only be perfectly free from any grosser element, but may rise to include a pure, holy, ideal emotion, yearning after goodness and truth, and prompting to the most perfect self-forgetfulness and self-surrender. It follows that the Divine education of mankind demands time, that it is necessarily historical. The higher and purer the consciousness to be formed, the slower is the process of formation. The mind has to be trained to perceive and assimilate its elements. What is at first embodied in outward forms and sensible representations at length works itself into the mind and heart, and becomes inward and spiritual. But this is a process which can only take place in time, it is the result of a historical development. Moral training is largely external before it can take root in the inner nature. The necessity of holiness is taught by the inculcation of ceremonial purity and separation. The idea of the spirituality of God is protected by the mystery and awe which attends His worship; the sense of His personality is kept alive by the representation of His covenant-making and covenant-keeping with the members of a privileged race. The sense of sin is deepened by the

requirement of sacrifice. Such illustrations from the history of religion indicate the mode in which the Divine Thought works itself in and through the life of men, how it leads them from the lower to the higher by a wisely ordered special experience of which specially prepared and constituted souls are able to read, translate, and communicate the meaning. The same principle is seen at work in other departments of human life. From time to time we observe the growth of ideas in a community. Not infrequently these are instances of deliberately designed education. Some far-seeing statesman perceives a truth which the great mass of the people utterly fail to comprehend, not for want of the necessary elements of the conception, but for want of power to grasp it as a whole. In course of time, however, it works itself into their life and being, so that it is truly said that the novelties of yesterday become the common-places of to-day. So if we compare the significance of many words in the New Testament with their usage in Classical Greek, we may at once perceive the difference of meaning, the increased fulness of significance which the words there possess. We know that it was the confluence of the streams of Greek and Hebrew thought which thus rendered possible the modification of the terms and adapted them to become the vehicle of the Christian revelation. We see, therefore, how Revelation supplies the defects of ordinary knowledge, and why in its mode of operation it is gradual, historical, and progressive, imperfect rather than false in its first representations, while ever advancing towards the communication of clearer light and more perfect knowledge.

Romanes remarks that if there are reasons (*e.g.* our state of probation) why revelation should not be demonstrative, we can well see why revelation should be the gradual unfolding of a plan. "For 1st, gradual evolution is in analogy with God's other work. 2nd, It

does not leave Him without witness at any time during the historical period. 3rd, It gives ample scope for persevering research at all times—*i.e.* a moral test, and not merely an intellectual assent to some one (*ex hypothesi*) unequivocally attested event in history" (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 171).

"If revelation has been of a progressive character, then it follows that it must have been so, not only historically, but likewise intellectually, morally, and spiritually. For thus only could it be always adapted to the advancing conditions of the human race" (*ibid.* p. 172).

"The mere fact of it being so largely incorporated with secular history renders the Christian religion unique; so to speak, the world, throughout its entire historical period, has been constituted the canvas on which this Divine revelation has been painted—and painted so gradually that not until the process had been going on for a couple of thousand years was it possible to perceive the subject thereof" (*ibid.* p. 173).

NOTE XV. (page 49). MIRACLES AND CHRISTIANITY.

"If miracles," said Baden Powell, "were in the estimation of a former age among the chief supports of Christianity, they are at present among the main difficulties and hindrances to its acceptance." "It is difficult to understand," justly replied Dean Mansel, "on what ground it can be maintained that the miracles are a hindrance to the belief in Christianity, except on a ground which asserts also that there is no distinctive Christianity in which to believe."

NOTE XVI. (page 50). 'HAVING NO HOPE.'

Mr. Romanes wrote in the conclusion of his *Candid Examination of Theism*:—"So far as the ruination of individual happiness is concerned, no one can have a more lively perception than myself of the possibly disastrous tendency of my work. So far as I am individually concerned, the result of this analysis has been to show that, whether I regard the problem of Theism on the lower plane of strictly relative probability, or on the higher plane of purely formal considerations, it equally becomes my obvious duty to stifle all belief of the kind which I conceive to be the noblest, and to discipline my intellect with regard to this matter into an attitude of the purest scepticism. And forasmuch as I am far from being able to agree with those who affirm that the twilight doctrine of the 'new faith' is a desirable substitute for the waning splendour of 'the old,' I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness: and although from henceforth the precept to 'work while it is day' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible. For whether it be due to my intelligence not being sufficiently advanced to meet the requirements of the age, or whether it be due to the memory of those sacred associations which to me at least were the sweetest that life has given, I cannot but feel that for me, and for others who think as I

do, there is a dreadful truth in those words of Hamilton,—
Philosophy having become a meditation, not merely of
death, but of annihilation, the precept *know thyself* has
become transformed into the terrific oracle to Œdipus,—

‘Mayest thou ne’er know the truth of what thou art’”

(Reprinted in *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 27, 28).

We cannot wonder that one who parted with his belief
so sadly should in later days have returned so far to it,
and that in the fragments recently edited by Canon Gore
we should, in that editor’s words, see “a mind, both able
and profoundly sincere, feeling after God and finding
Him.”

NOTE XVII. (page 54). RATIONALISM AND MIRACLES.

“Are we to say that the results of the rationalising
temper are the works of reason? Surely not. The
rationalist rejects miracles; and if you force him to a
discussion, he may no doubt produce from the ample
stores of past controversy plenty of argument in support
of his belief. But do not therefore assume that his
belief is the result of his argument. The odds are
strongly in favour of argument and belief, having both
grown up under the fostering influence of his ‘psycho-
logical climate’” (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*,
p. 210).

“Through the greater portion of the world’s history
the ‘ordinary mode of interpreting sense-perception’ has
been perfectly consistent with so-called ‘supernatural’
phenomena. It may become so again. And if during
the rationalising centuries this has not been the case, it
is because the interpretation of sense-perceptions has
during that period been more and more governed by that

naturalistic theory of the world to which it has been steadily gravitating" (*ibid.* p. 171).

NOTE XVIII. (page 55). PARASITIC MORALITY.

"Biologists tell us of parasites which live, and can only live, within the bodies of animals more highly organised than they. For them their luckless host has to find food, to digest it, and to convert it into nourishment which they can consume without exertion, and assimilate without difficulty. Their structure is of the simplest kind. Their host sees for them, so they need no eyes; he hears for them, so they need no ears; he works for them and contrives for them, so they need but feeble muscles and an undeveloped nervous system. But are we to conclude from this that for the animal kingdom eyes and ears, powerful limbs and complex nerves, are superfluities? They are superfluities for the parasite only because they have first been necessities for the host, and when the host perishes, the parasite, in their absence, is not unlikely to perish also.

"So it is with those persons who claim to show by their example that naturalism is practically consistent with the maintenance of ethical ideals with which naturalism has no natural affinity. Their spiritual life is parasitic; it is sheltered by convictions which belong, not to them, but to the society of which they form a part; it is nourished by processes in which they take no share. And when those convictions decay, and those processes come to an end, the alien life which they have maintained can scarce be expected to outlast them" (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 82, 83).

NOTE XIX. (page 59).

TESTIMONIES TO THE CHARACTER AND TEACHING OF CHRIST.

A few additional testimonies may be given from the Sermon referred to in the text and other sources. Such quotations become the common-places of Apologetic literature, but are none the less valuable and significant.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.—“Try all the ways of righteousness you can think of, and you will find that no way brings you to it, except the way of Jesus, but that this way does bring you to it.”

AUTHOR OF “ECCE HOMO.”—“The story of his life will always remain the one record in which the moral perfection of man stands revealed in its root and unity, the hidden spring made palpably manifest by which the whole machine is moved. And as in the will of God this unique man was elected to a unique sorrow, and holds as undisputed a sovereignty in suffering as in self-devotion, all lesser examples and lives will for ever hold a subordinate place, and serve chiefly to reflect light on the central and original example.”

RENAN.—“In Jesus was condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature. . . . God is in him. He feels himself with God, and he draws from his own heart what he tells us of his Father. He lives in the bosom of God by the intercommunion of every moment.” Again (with reference to the teaching of Jesus),—“A kind of splendour at once mild and terrible, a divine force, if I may so speak, invests those utterances, detaches them from the context, and renders them easy of recognition to the critic. The real words of Jesus make themselves known, so to say, by their own act. The moment you touch them, you feel them vibrate.”

STRAUSS, to whom, says Farrar (*Witness of History to Christ*, p. 80, note), Jesus was but "a wise Galilæan Rabbi."—Jesus is "the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion, the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible."

CONGREVE (one of the leaders of English Comtists).—"The more thoroughly you mould yourselves into his image, the more keen will be your sympathy and admiration."

JOHN STUART MILL (in addition to the words quoted in the text) says: "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life."

Romanes justly remarks,—“Those in whom the religious sentiment is intact, but who have rejected Christianity on intellectual grounds, still almost deify Christ. . . . If we estimate the greatness of a man by the influence which he has exerted on mankind, there can be no question, even from the secular point of view, that Christ is much the greatest man who has ever lived” (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 159).

NOTE XX. (page 63).

IS THE GOSPEL PORTRAIT AN INVENTION?

Rousseau had already laid his finger upon the same important element of the problem, the impossibility of *inventing* the character of Christ,—“Should we suppose the Gospel was a story, invented to please? It is not in this manner that we forge tales. . . . Never did the Jewish authors discover such language or morality; and the Gospel has such striking marks of truth, and is so perfectly inimitable, that the invention of it would be more astonishing than the hero of it.”

NOTE XXI. (page 69).

BAUR AND HARNACK ON THE RESURRECTION.

Baur's position may be illustrated by a further quotation from the same work.—“The view we take of the Resurrection,” he says, “is of minor importance for the history. We may regard it as an outward objective miracle, or as a subjective psychological miracle; since, though we assume that an inward spiritual process was possible by which the unbelief of the disciples at the time of the death of Jesus was changed into belief in his resurrection, still no psychological analogy can show what that process was. In any case it is only through the consciousness of the disciples that we have any knowledge of that which was the object of their faith; and thus we cannot go further than to say that by whatever means this result was brought about, the resurrection of Jesus became a fact to their consciousness, and was as real to them as any historical event” (*Church History*, Eng. tr., vol. i. pp. 42, 43).

Harnack, touching upon the same point, the place of the resurrection of Christ in the faith of the first disciples, says: "This permanent importance as the Lord, he (Jesus) secured not by disclosures about the mystery of his Person, but by the impression of his life, and the interpretation of his death. He interprets it, like all his sufferings, as a victory, as the passing over to his glory, and in spite of the cry of God-forsakenness upon the cross, he has proved himself able to awaken in his followers the real conviction that he lives and is Lord and Judge of the living and the dead" (*History of Dogma*, Eng. trans., vol. i. p. 60). His note on the belief in the resurrection of Christ (*ibid.* pp. 85-87) is a curious struggle to get the benefit of the *belief* without admission of the *fact*. We may admit that "religious belief, that is, trust in God," is necessary to an intelligent acceptance of the testimony to the fact, and also that "the question generally as to whether Jesus has risen, can have no existence for any one who looks at it apart from the contents and worth of the Person of Jesus." We may admit that probably "no appearances of the Lord could permanently have convinced them (his disciples) of his life, if they had not possessed in their hearts the impression of his Person." But we cannot admit that the "fact that friends and adherents of Jesus were convinced that they had seen him, especially when they themselves explain that he appeared to them in heavenly glory, gives, to those who are in earnest about fixing historical facts, not the least cause for the assumption that Jesus did not continue in the grave." This conviction, Harnack says, "of having seen the Lord was no doubt of the greatest importance for the disciples and made them Evangelists; but what they saw cannot at first help us." Yet the Christian of to-day "believes in a future life for himself with God because he believes that Christ lives. That is the peculiarity and paradox of Christian faith.

. . . It is Christian to pray that God would give the Spirit to make us strong to overcome the feelings and the doubts of nature, and create belief in an eternal life through the experience of 'dying to live.' When this faith, obtained in this way, exists, it has always been supported by the conviction that the Man lives who brought life and immortality to light." But on what, we may ask, does this mighty conviction rest? Why should "the Man" live rather than others if he continued in the grave? Would the impression made by His Person have produced the conviction in the disciples without the appearances which "made them Evangelists"? And as for the "form in which Jesus lives," is there no alternative between the "simple reanimation of his mortal body" and that purely ideal and spiritual existence, in which alone Harnack seems to see the significance of the resurrection story, for which no evidence can be offered except the impression produced by His Person, and which is made to bear the weight of the whole subsequent development? Surely if there is a "natural body," there is also a "spiritual body."

NOTE XXII. (page 70).

DISCREPANCIES IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE
RESURRECTION.

Mr. Hutton, in his paper upon "Christian Evidences, Popular and Critical," admits that "none of the extant accounts agree closely either with each other, or with St. Paul's summary of the facts." "I think," he adds, "that every candid person will admit that this condition of the external evidence is not of the kind which any one would wish for the purpose of establishing by direct testimony a very marvellous and unprecedented event." But when we

examine Keim's statement of the contradictions he finds in the narrative, many vanish as altogether unimportant, and many it is clear could only be considered contradictory if each of the accounts was manifestly intended to be exhaustive; the statements are not really incompatible. And though of many points we are unable to tell from the narratives how they fitted into each other and formed part of the same series of events, it has not, as pointed out in the text, been found impossible to show how they *may* have happened, the contradiction being thus found to be, after all, only apparent. Keim himself, while claiming that the details of the resurrection-story "swarm with contradiction and myth," declares that the event itself "is one of the best-attested incidents of the New Testament."

NOTE XXIII. (page 78).

ELEVATION AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE
CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

"It is on all sides worth considering that the revolution effected by Christianity in human life is immeasurable and unparalleled by any other movement in history. . . . Not only is Christianity immeasurably in advance of all other religions. It is no less so of every other system of thought that has ever been promulgated in regard to all that is moral and spiritual. Whether it be true or false, it is certain that neither philosophy, science, nor poetry has ever produced results in thought, conduct, or beauty in any degree to be compared with it. This, I think, will be on all hands allowed as regards conduct. As regards thought and beauty it may be disputed. But, consider, what has all the science or all the philosophy of the world done for the thought of mankind to be compared with the one

doctrine 'God is love'? Whether or not true, conceive what belief in it has been to thousands of millions of our race—*i.e.* its influence on human thought, and thence on human conduct. Thus to admit its incomparable influence in conduct is indirectly to admit it as regards thought. Again, as regards beauty, the man who fails to see its incomparable excellence in this respect merely shows his own deficiency in the appreciation of all that is noblest in man. True or not true, the entire story of the Cross, from its commencement in prophetic aspiration to its culmination in the Gospel, is by far the most magnificent in literature. And surely the fact of its having all been lived does not detract from its poetic value. Nor does the fact of its being capable of appropriation by the individual Christian of to-day as still a vital religion detract from its sublimity. Only to a man wholly destitute of spiritual perception can it be that Christianity should fail to appear the greatest exhibition of the beautiful, the sublime, and of all else that appeals to our spiritual nature, which has ever been known upon our earth" (Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 159, 160).

"It is true that beliefs like this (*i.e.* those involved in the Christian form of Theism) do not in any narrow sense resolve our doubts nor provide us with explanations. But they give us something better than many explanations. For they minister, or rather the Reality behind them ministers, to one of our deepest ethical needs; to a need which, far from showing signs of diminution, seems to grow with the growth of civilisation, and to touch us even more keenly as the hardness of an earlier time dissolves away" (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 354).

NOTE XXIV. (page 81). PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Christian Ethics are inseparably connected with Christian Theology ; we can never infer, beyond a certain limit, the commandments of God from the conditions of life, we must apply the former to the latter. When Pagan Ethics pursued the former course, God was to them either an abstraction, or a Pantheistic unity, from which a Utilitarian or Necessitarian morality inevitably flowed. Christian Ethics assume as their starting-point a living and personal God in communion with men, and from this standpoint seek to explain and to guide human life. "All moral philosophy, and especially the moral philosophy of Paganism, has first to determine the end of the quest, then the means by which this end may be best secured ; and each of these points has to be decided by pure reason. Christian morality is synthetic ; Pagan morality, as soon as it put forward any claim to be philosophical, became at once analytic" (Wilkins, *Light of the World*, p. 142).

NOTE XXV. (page 84). MORAL FAILURE OF BUDDHISM.

Archdeacon Hardwicke (in *Christ and other Masters*) thus sums up the practical effect of Buddhism, without doubt the richest of all the Eastern systems in moral elements and precepts :—"Fair and lovely as might be the outward forms of Buddhism, its inherent principles were such as made it well-nigh powerless in the training of society, and therefore it has left the countries which it overran the prey of superstition and of demon-worship, of political misrule, and of spiritual lethargy. Confessing no supreme God, who is at once the Legislator and the Judge, its moral end was ultimately void of all authority.

Denying also the true dignity and freedom of the human agent, it invested moral sentiments and relations with a kind of physical outsideness; they were all parts of a great system with which the fortunes of the Buddhist, why he knew not, were mechanically connected. He spoke indeed of 'laws,' but these were only common rules of action, according to which all things are found to happen; vice had no intrinsic hideousness, and virtue was another name for calculating prudence; while love itself was, in the creed of Buddhism, little more than animal sympathy, or the condolence of one sufferer with his fellow. Buddhism also could discourse of 'duty'; but such duty, as it had no object and no standard, was devoid of moral motion; it shrank into a lifeless acquiescence in some stern necessity, a blind submission to some iron law. The Buddhist's principle of action was 'I must'; he could not say 'I ought.'"

NOTE XXVI. (page 86). LECKY ON PAGAN ETHICS.

The whole paragraph, of which the words quoted form the conclusion, is deserving of attention as a clear statement of the contrast between Paganism and Christianity in their respective bearing upon morality. "The Ethics of Paganism," Mr. Lecky remarks, "were part of a philosophy. The Ethics of Christianity were part of a religion. The first were the speculations of a few highly cultivated individuals, and neither had nor could have had any direct influence upon the masses of mankind. The second were indissolubly connected with the worship, hopes, and fears of a vast religious system that acts at least as powerfully on the most ignorant as on the most educated. . . . To make men virtuous was (in the pagan idea) no more the function of the priest than of the physician. On the other hand, the philosophical expositions of duty

were wholly unconnected with the religious ceremonies of the temple. To amalgamate these two spheres, to incorporate moral culture with religion, and thus to enlist in its behalf that desire to enter, by means of ceremonial observances, into direct communication with Heaven, which experience has shown to be one of the most universal and powerful passions of mankind, was among the most important achievements of Christianity. Something, no doubt, had been already attempted in this direction. . . . But it was the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity that its moral influence was not indirect, casual, remote, or spasmodic. Unlike all pagan religions, etc.”

NOTE XXVII. (page 92).

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELATIONS OF THE SEXES.

“No dispassionate student of history can doubt that the Christian Ethic has resulted in the formation of a new type of character and conduct which may be literally described as ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’ Perhaps supreme amongst its results has been its influence in refining and ennobling the relations of the sexes. The ideals of manhood and womanhood, their mutual relations, —each one developing the other, and bringing out all that is noblest and best in it, each being nevertheless distinct from the other,—‘For woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse,’—these things were never taught in the same way by any antecedent system. The Christian virtues of constancy, patience, tenderness, and devotion between the sexes have given rise to altogether new phases of character,—the trust of the child, the devotion of the mother, the self-sacrifice of the sister for the brother, the toil of the father for the son, and of the son at times for his parents. All this has been the product of a new process of evolution within the Christian

brotherhood, but it was not evolved out of the antecedent Ethic of the world" (Knight, *The Christian Ethic*, Preface, pp. xii. xiii.)

NOTE XXVIII. (page 107).

PERSONAL ASSURANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

Religion is no doubt differentiated from many other subjects which, like it, depend upon the evidences forthcoming with regard to them, by the fact that it touches on regions of thought and existence on which a certain amount of obscurity necessarily rests. Its aspirations go forth towards the Infinite, it recognises that its being is rooted in the Infinite. It is not with existence in space and time merely that it has to do; it derives much of its power from a recognition that the finite cannot exhaust or satisfy man's spiritual nature, that if there be nothing beyond the finite, some of the highest and finest developments of man's nature must wither and disappear. The inner experiences also to which religion appeals belong to the secret manifestations of the soul's life, which cannot be exhibited or analysed, and yet contribute no inconsiderable portion of the assurance with which religious truth is held. In this light the conclusion of the great empirical thinker who sees the universe of the actual everywhere shading off into the unknowable, which must be postulated, but of which we can only be certain that it is, and that it is the fountain of force, is of special interest and suggestiveness. Though the object of its faith is not regarded as unknowable, or even as in many respects unknown, Christianity yet admits the inadequacy of its knowledge and the difficulty which the element of infinity introduces into its reasonings. Only as Mr. Spencer found himself impelled to postulate something besides phenomena, Christianity sets store by the tend-

encies and trend of things as throwing light upon much as to which direct experience cannot be obtained or expected.

One of the most influential factors in the production of this personal assurance is the relation of Faith to Action, the way in which Faith is necessary to experience, and is confirmed and justified by it. "Faith or assurance, which, if not in excess of reason, is at least independent of it, seems to be a necessity in every great department of knowledge which touches on action; and what great department is there which does not? The analysis of sense-experience teaches us that we require it in our ordinary dealings with the material world. The most cursory examination into the springs of moral action shows that it is an indispensable supplement to ethical speculation. Theologians are for the most part agreed that without it religion is but the ineffectual profession of a barren creed" (A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 240, 241).

Another factor consists in the happiness or peace produced by Faith. Compare the "secret of Jesus"—a phrase made familiar to us by Mr. Matthew Arnold. "Consider the happiness of religious—and chiefly of the highest religious, *i.e.* Christian—belief. It is a matter of fact that besides being most intense, it is most enduring, growing, and never staled by custom. In short, according to the universal testimony of those who have it, it differs from all other happiness not only in degree, but in kind. Those who have it can usually testify to what they used to be without it. It has no relation to intellectual status. It is a thing by itself and supreme" (Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 152).

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Among books embracing a somewhat similar range of topics to that of the present Manual, are :—

- | | |
|--|----------|
| G. P. Fisher, <i>Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief.</i> Hodder and Stoughton | 10s. 6d. |
| T. Vincent Tymms, <i>Mystery of God.</i> Elliot Stock | 7s. 6d. |
| R. A. Redford, <i>Christian's Plea against Modern Unbelief.</i> Hodder and Stoughton | 7s. 6d. |
| T. Christlieb, <i>Modern Doubt and Christian Belief.</i>
T. & T. Clark | 10s. 6d. |
| C. E. Luthardt, <i>Fundamental Truths of Christianity.</i>
T. & T. Clark | 6s. |
| Alex. Mair, <i>Studies in the Christian Evidences.</i>
Third Edition. T. & T. Clark | 6s. |
| J. Agar Beet, <i>Credentials of the Gospel.</i> Wesleyan
Methodist Bookroom | 2s. 6d. |
| J. Kennedy, <i>Popular Handbook of Christian Evi-
dences.</i> Sunday School Union | 3s. 6d. |
| C. A. Row, <i>Manual of Christian Evidences.</i> Hodder
and Stoughton | 2s. 6d. |

Also the Volumes of Lectures delivered under the auspices of the Christian Evidence Society, and published by Hodder and Stoughton, viz.—

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| <i>Modern Scepticism.</i> 2s. 6d. † |
| <i>Faith and Free Thought.</i> 2s. |
| <i>Popular Objections to Revealed Truth.</i> 1s. 8d. |
| <i>Strivings for the Faith.</i> 1s. 6d. |
| <i>Credentials of Christianity.</i> 1s. 6d. |

and the Series of *Present Day Tracts*, published by the Religious Tract Society. Vols. I.-XII. 2s. 6d. each.

The following references and additional notes, arranged in order of the chapters of this Handbook, may be found useful, and will show how far the scope of the above-named works is coincident with that of the Manual.

- INTROD.—Consult any History of Apologetics, such as that in Shedd's *History of Doctrines*, vol. i., or Redford, part i. Also Kennedy, part i. chap. i.; Mair, ii.; Bruce, *Apologetics*, Introd.
- CHAP. I.—On Religion, see Kennedy, part i. chap. iii.; Luthardt, vi. Also Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, i.; Fairbairn, *City of God*, part i. section ii.; Newman Smyth, *The Religious Feeling*. Carpenter, *Permanent Elements of Religion*.
- On Theism, Tymms, iii.; Fisher, ii.; Luthardt, iii.; Kennedy, part i. chap. iv.; Redford, part ii. Also Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, ii.; Flint, *Theism*; Row, *Christian Theism*; Davidson, *Theism and Human Nature*; Cazenove, *Historic Aspects of the a priori Argument*; Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, iii.
- CHAP. II.—PART I.—On Antitheistic Theories generally, see Fisher, iii.; Kennedy, part i. chap. ii.; Christlieb, iii.; Redford, part i. Also Flint, *Antitheistic Theories*; Fairbairn, *City of God*, part i. section i.; Hutton, *Theological Essays*, i.-iv.; Bruce, *Apologetics*, book i.
- On Materialism, Tymms, i.
- On Pantheism, Tymms, ii.
- On Agnosticism, Beet, note iii. Also Iverach, *Is God knowable?*
- CHAP. II.—PART II.—Fisher, xix.; Mair, i.; Fairbairn, "Theism and Scientific Speculation," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, etc.; Kennedy, *Natural Theology and Modern Thought*; Le Conte, *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*; Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*.
- CHAP. III.—Tymms, iv.-vi.; Kennedy, part i. chap. vii.; Mair, iii.; Redford, part iii.; Luthardt, vii. viii. Also Fisher, *Nature and Method of Revelation*; Bruce, *The Chief End of Revelation*; Hutton, *Theological Essays*, v.
- CHAP. IV.—Fisher, iv. vi. x.; Mair, viii.; Row, part ii.; Redford, part iii. chap. v. Also Tulloch, *The Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of Modern Criticism* (a reply to Renan); Godet, *Defence of the Christian Faith*, iii. iv.

- CHAP. V.—Fisher, v. ; Tymms, viii. ; Mair, vii. ; Row, chaps. iii. iv. ; Kennedy, part ii. chap. iii. ; Redford, part iii. chap. iv. ; Beet, v. Also Fairbairn, *City of God*, part iii. section ii. ; Godet, *Defence of the Christian Faith*, v. vi. ; Ullmann, *Sinlessness of Jesus* ; Schaff, *Person of Christ* ; Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, chap. x.
- CHAP. VI.—Tymms, ix. ; Row, x. ; Kennedy, part ii. chap. vi. ; Mair, ix. ; Christlieb, vii. ; Bruce, *Apologetics*, book iii. chap. iv. Dr. Kennedy has a separate work upon *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. See also Hutton, *Theological Essays*, vi., Godet, *Defence of the Christian Faith*, i. ii., and Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*.
- CHAP. VII.—Fisher, xiii. xiv. ; Tymms, x. ; Row, v. ; Kennedy, part ii. chap. vii. For an excellent discussion of the relation of Christian to Pagan Ethics, see Wilkins, *Light of the World*. Consult also works on Christian Ethics, such as those of Martensen, Wuttke, Dorner, Newman Smyth ; and on the History of Christian Ethics, such as Luthardt, vol. i. (recently translated), or Sidgwick's *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, chap. iii.
- CHAP. VIII.—Fisher, xv. ; Row, i.-iii. ; Kennedy, part ii. chap. vii. ; Brace's *Gesta Christi* contains a large amount of information from which, as well as from Lecky's *History of European Morals*, the statements in the text are mostly drawn. Consult also Uhlhorn, *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*.
- CHAP. IX.—The lecture (xi.) by Dr. Mair on this subject is one of his best. Some use has also been made of the lecture in *Faith and Free Thought*, and of that of Canon Cook in the *Modern Scepticism* series.

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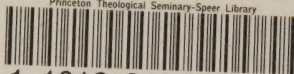
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